University of Alberta

The Grandmothering Experience of Indo-Fijians in Canada

By

Irene Shankar

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Department of Sociology

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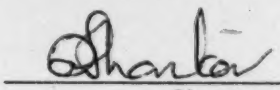

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Grandmothering Experience of Indo-Fijian Immigrants in Canada" submitted by Irene Shankar in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Date: February 11, 2003

Dedicated to my Amma.

Abstract

There is an increasing recognition of the significant impact grandparents have in the lives of their grandchildren, however, surprisingly little is known about the role of immigrant grandparents. This exploratory study examines the impact of immigration on the grandmothering experience of Indo-Fijians residing in Canada. In-depth semi-structured interviews are used to determine the underlying structural and cultural reasons behind grandmothers engaging in the care of their grandchildren. The findings from this qualitative study are interpreted using an exchange theory perspective. The results reveal that these grandmothers are providing care for paternal grandchildren in expectation of present and future financial and social assistance from their sons. However, the assistance provided by the sons are sometimes inconsistent with the quality and form of assistance expected by the grandmothers. Thus, as the costs of this role increase grandmothers increasingly seek to renegotiate the caregiver role. The two significant factors that enable or hinder grandmothers' ability to renegotiate the caregiver role are the grandmothers' marital status and ability to secure alternate sources of financial assistance. Implications for social policy are discussed.

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Chapter 1

A. Introduction

Grandparenting is a multifaceted role that is meaningful to both grandparents and grandchildren alike. Most adults and children speak fondly of their relationship with their grandparents and their time together and most grandparents speak lovingly of their relationship with their grandchildren. There is a growing recognition of the meaningful and fundamental role grandparents play in their grandchildren's lives. The grandparent role is dependent on a wide range of factors such as the grandparent's ethnicity, education, age, socioeconomic status and gender. For instance, in the United States, studies have revealed that grandmothers stepping in to care for their grandchildren due to the unavailability of the parents resulting from drug or alcohol addiction, incarceration, or physical or mental illness tend to be disproportionately from lower socioeconomic status (Fuller-Thompson et al. 1997; Grogan-Kaylor 2000; Kluger and Aprea 1999; Minkler 1999). The grandparenting experience is also dependent on factors such as the grandchild's gender, age and geographical proximity. For example, grandparents generally report greater affinity for those grandchildren living in close proximity to them.

Kivnick (1985) describes the grandparent role as being composed of three components: (1) the meaning people associate with the grandparent role, (2) the behaviors related to the grandparenting role, and (3) the degree of satisfaction received from fulfilling this role. All of these three components are related. However, the meaning, behavior, and satisfaction people associate with the grandparent role can vary enormously with every individual. Conversely, a diverse range of behavior can have the same meaning to different people. For instance, for some grandparents going to a grandchild's soccer game may be an indication of their support and love for their grandchildren while for others sending money through mail can demonstrate their support and love.

There are also symbolic functions attached to being a grandparent. Bengtson (1985) states that there are four symbolic dimensions of grandparenthood. The first of these dimensions is titled "being there". There are two ways of "being there". "The presence of grandparents mitigates against the obtrusive events of the outside world and disruptive events of role transitions. Their presence serves to maintain the identity of the family and provides a buffer against its mortality" (Bengston 1985:21). Findings from studies demonstrate that the mere presence of grandparents serves to be a calming influence on the grandchildren during life changing events such as divorce or death of a parent (Bengston 1985). The second symbolic function of grandparents is that of a "family watchdog" or the "national guard." In this role grandparents are perceived to be there to provide protection and care if need arises. The third symbolic function of the grandparent is that of an arbitrator who negotiates between parents and children, and the fourth function of the grandparent is to provide a link or connection from the past to the present and future.

The components of the grandparent role and the symbolic functions of grandparenthood discussed above are limited in their applicability to diverse populations. Therefore, information is needed in regards to what role immigrant grandparents have in their grandchildren's lives. As an Indo-Fijian immigrant, I am particularly interested in investigating the grandparenting experience of Indo-Fijian grandmothers residing in Canada.[1]

Among many of the Indo-Fijian families the adult children immigrate to Canada first and sponsor their parents after a few years. Upon migration to Canada, most older individuals reside with their adult children and grandchildren. In the Indo-Fijian community, older females are less likely to be employed or engaged in community groups or activities. Thus, their primary responsibility is to care for grandchildren while their adult children are at work.

The purpose of this study is to examine the grandparenting experience of these older immigrant Indo-Fijian women. I will explore whether grandmothers' caregiving for their

grandchildren facilitates the creation of a larger social network or restricts their opportunity to form new relationships. For example, activities such as bringing children to school may provide them with greater opportunities to interact with other individuals in similar situations. On the other hand, caregiving responsibility may be restrictive due to its all-encompassing nature and grandmothers may lack the time and energy to pursue other interests or activities that would enhance their level of integration in Canadian society. Moreover, what roles are grandmothers playing in their grandchildren's lives? How does caregiving by the grandmother help the adult children? For instance, if the parents (adult children) are new immigrants themselves who are working towards achieving financial, social and psychological integration into the Canadian society, they may not have as much time and energy to devote to their children. In these situations, the grandparents may take on more of the parental roles freeing the parents to pursue their goal of integration. It remains to be seen what impact this form of caregiving has on the grandmother's life? Are grandmothers benefiting financially or socially by caring for their grandchildren? Are there any negative consequences of this caregiving arrangement for the grandmother?

It also needs to be questioned whether the definition and experience of grandmothering radically changes in the Canadian context. To elaborate, new immigrants in Canada may perceive caregiving as an obligation. Bellamy (1993:168) explains "...elderly parents depend totally on their sponsors for income support for 10 years, after which the old age pension affords partial relief in Canada." This may particularly be the case where adult children sponsor parents to help with the grandchildren. Due to their precarious financial situation, these grandmothers may feel obligated to assist and may be less inclined to refuse regardless of health, financial, social or emotional costs to themselves. Women who picture themselves needing assistance when they are older may seek to solidify their relationship with their son or daughter by caring for their grandchildren in an effort to ensure the

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1 According to the 1996 Census there are currently 20,725 immigrants from Fiji residing in Canada.

availability of a viable social support network in old age. It needs to be assessed whether the Indo-Fijian grandmothers provide care for their grandchildren in exchange for support and assistance that they currently receive or hope to receive in the future from their adult children.

The issue of context is further complicated by factors such as long Canadian winters, new physical environment, lack of social networks, and parents of the children working full-time. It is anticipated that these factors serve to create a unique grandmothering experience that these women were not socialized to fulfil. For instance, grandmothers in Fiji can visit relatives and neighbors who are engaged in a similar activity of caring for their grandchildren. On the other hand, in Canada, they may not have the access or ability to visit with other grandmothers in similar situations. Their language difficulties, the cold climate, lack of peers, vehicle accessibility and limited knowledge of public transportation may restrict their access and ability to visit with other grandmothers.

The grandparenting role may be subjected to further change if the grandmothers are new immigrants themselves trying to achieve financial, social and psychological integration. Does their goal of integration hinder their ability to act as the grandmother they expected or hoped to be? To elaborate, a grandmother who immigrates to Canada in her 40s or 50s may need to secure employment (maybe for the first time), search for a new social network and learn one of the official languages. Their focus on such necessary goals may prevent them from playing the role of the grandmother that they were socialized to fulfill. On the other hand, a new immigrant who actively participates in their grandchildren's lives may not have the same opportunities to achieve financial, social and psychological integration. For example, a grandmother who decides to remain at home and care for her grandchildren may have to forgo savings she may have accumulated or social contacts she may have made through her employment. Thus, caring for grandchildren may increase the grandmother's dependence on her adult children for financial and social support.

As the previous research has not addressed the questions listed above, the proposed research project will examine some of these issues. It is anticipated that the present research on the Indo-Fijian immigrant population will reveal the diverse issues faced by these grandmothers. Specifically, it will focus on four broad issues: (1) the impact of grandmothering on cultural integration; (2) the meaning of the grandmother role to the respondents; (3) the type of grandparenting performed by the grandmothers; and (4) the impact residing in Canada has on the grandmother role.

The significance of this study lies in its ability to offer insight into and knowledge of the grandmothering experience from the perspective of Indo-Fijian grandmothers. This research will examine the impact immigrating to a new country has on the grandmothering experience of these women. As it will be demonstrated in the following chapter, research on grandparenting has largely been conducted on North American grandparents. Information pertaining to grandparenthood is lacking for the Indo-Fijian population residing in Canada. Moreover, due to their traditional and cultural practices, it is expected that the grandmothering role will diverge from prevalent grandparenting models. The present study seeks to extend the research base by examining Indo-Fijian immigrant grandmothers' grandparenting and the factors that enable or hinder their grandmothering role.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

A. Introduction

In Western society, an increasing number of adults are living long enough to become grandparents. Advancements in medical technology and bioscience have enabled more and more people to survive to old age. While there are more people surviving to old age there is increasing diversity in how the grandparent role is interpreted and fulfilled. The grandparent role may have a different meaning and value for each person. Further, the enactment of the role is contingent on a variety of factors such as the grandparent's age, gender, marital status, socio-economic background, education, race, employment status, health, experience with their own grandparents, relationship with the parents of their grandchildren, and whether they are the maternal or paternal grandparent. The grandparent-grandchild relationship is also dependent on grandchild's age, health, geographical proximity, and the parents' marital status and basic ability to fulfil their parental duties. The perception and satisfaction with the grandparent role is also dependent on when they become a grandparent and whether it was expected or not.

In Canada, 77% of older Canadians have at least one grandchild (Rosenthal and Gladstone 2000). The increase in life expectancy and changes in fertility have led to important changes in the grandparent role. Traditionally, the grandparent role was culturally deemed to be a role confined to old age, however, most people today become grandparents in their late 40s and early 50s (Mills et al. 2001; Rosenthal and Gladstone 2000). During the last century, the overall trend consisted of earlier marriages and smaller families (Hagestad and Burton 1986). This has resulted in a greater number of people becoming a grandparent at an earlier age and living long enough to become even great grandparents. Due to the increase in life expectancy, most adults can expect to be grandparents for as much as 30 years of their life (Paul 2002). Moreover, there is less of an overlap between parenting and grandparenting statuses. To elaborate, women stop having children at an earlier age and, therefore, are not in

the parenting phase of their life when grandchildren are born (Hagestad and Burton 1986). This should be interpreted with caution since among some segments of the population an increasing number of adults are becoming grandparents while still in the parenting phase. This brings its own complications and effects on the grandparenting role, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

B. Theory

The current interest in the area of grandparenting can be attributed in part to theoretical advancement in the area of family studies. Researchers are beginning to shift away from their monolithic focus on the individual and are concentrating more on the family context (Allen et al. 2000). Theories such as socioemotional selectivity and intergenerational family solidarity theory have placed greater attention on the area of cross-generational relationships across the life course. Socioemotional selectivity theory states that as individuals age they slowly decrease their social interactions with people outside their family while increasing their contact with family members. Thus, there are deliberate adjustments made by the aging individual to develop his or her social and emotional capital in a family context. According to socioemotional selectivity theory, grandparents maintain contact with their adult children and grandchildren in an attempt to enhance and secure their social and emotional capital.

Intergenerational family solidarity theory states that six components are essential for intergenerational solidarity: "association or contact, affection or emotional closeness, consensus or agreement, function or instrumental support and resource sharing, familism or normative obligations, and opportunity structures for family interaction" (Allen et al. 2000:916). Studies conducted in North America on intergenerational relationships and the effect of family network on the mental well being of older adults have supported the assertions of this theory. However, the studies conducted to date have been on Caucasian multigenerational families and the findings are limited in applicability to other ethnic groups.

Life-course perspective theory has been rejuvenated in the last decade by merging with other fields of study such as family development, demography, and human development (Allen at al. 2000). There is greater recognition among gerontologists of the merit of the life-course perspective. The life course perspective links both macro and micro levels of theory and research methods (Allen et al. 2000). This perspective recognizes that an individual's life, similar to a family, follows a developmental course. Every individual shapes and determines the direction of his or her life. According to the life-course perspective, people are linked together in family and/or social networks and members of these networks have the potential for affecting each other in a both positive and negative manner. Thus, family relationships are constantly renegotiated and transfigured to meet the needs of every member as their circumstances change or as they undergo life transitions.

In spite of new developments in the theoretical realm there is still significant research directed by traditional theories such as kin-keeper theory and kin selection theory. Kin-keeper theory dictates that women are more invested in keeping the family unit together (Dubas 2001). This theory is often evaluated against the kin-selection theory, which stems from a neo-Darwinian perspective and advocates that all humans' main goal is to ensure the survival of their genes. Therefore, males and females invest in their kin in order to ensure survival of their genes. Moreover, men are less invested since they are able to reproduce throughout their life while for women the reproduction years are limited. Nevertheless, Dubas (2001) found that kin-selection theory is inadequate in explaining variations in grandparenting.

C. Typology of Grandparents

There has been considerable work done in the area of grandparenting styles (Neugarten and Weinstein 1964; Cherlin and Furstenberg 1985; Connidis 1988; Bengston 1985). Neugarten and Weinstein's (1964) study revealed five styles of grandparenting: (1) formal, (2) fun-seeker, (3) surrogate-parent, (4) reservoir-of-family-wisdom, (5) distant-figure. The formal style of grandparenting is characteristic of grandparents not wanting to

become overly involved in their grandchildren's lives and preferring to leave the upbringing of their grandchildren to the parents. The fun-seeker grandparents attempt to engage in fun-filled leisure activities while they are with their grandchildren. The fun-seeker grandparents tend to be younger. Furthermore, grandmothers are more likely to adopt this grandparenting style. The surrogate-parent cares for their grandchildren while the parents are working or unavailable. The reservoir-of-family-wisdom is called upon as source of information and advice. The distant figure grandparents have infrequent and minimal contact with their grandchildren. Moreover, the contact usually takes place on special occasions and holidays. Men are more likely than women to adhere to this grandparenting style. Similarly, Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986) found three different styles of grandparenting: (1) remote, (2) companionate, (3) involved. The companionate style represents grandparents who are close to their children but have not assumed the parental role. The companionate style is the most common form of grandparenting. The companionate style is followed in prevalence by the remote grandparenting style in which grandparents are not as close to their grandchildren mainly due to geographical distance. The involved grandparent resides in close proximity to their grandchild(ren) and often takes on parental responsibility of the grandchild(ren) in response to crisis such as divorce or separation.

Mueller et al. (2002) expands on these typologies through an in-depth examination of older Americans' relationships with their adolescent grandchildren. Mueller et al.'s study finds five grandparenting styles: influential, supportive, passive, authority-oriented and detached. Influential grandparents are highly involved in their grandchildren's lives. These grandparents have the most contact, greatest involvement in activities, are closest in terms of intimacy and provide the most help and instrumental assistance to their grandchildren. Nevertheless, the characteristics of supportive grandparents are similar to the influential style with the exception that supportive grandparents do not engage in authoritative or disciplinary roles with their grandchild. In contrast, passive grandparents are moderately involved and

engage in fewer activities with their grandchildren. The outstanding difference for passive grandparents is their lack of instrumental assistance to their grandchildren. Authority-oriented grandparents also report low levels of contact with their grandchildren and their contact tends to be through indirect means. They mainly see themselves as authority-figures in their grandchildren's lives. Authority-oriented grandparents do provide instrumental assistance but at less frequency than the influential and supportive grandparents. Detached grandparents have the least amount of contact with their grandchildren. Among detached grandparents, half report providing financial assistance to their grandchildren (Mueller et al. 2002). Nevertheless, the major characteristic of detached grandparents is that they do not know or do not have an intimate relationship with their grandchildren.

D. Meaning of Grandparenthood

A grandparent can signify and mean a great many things to the grandchild. Kornhaber and Woodward (1985) found that to a grandchild their grandparent can be a role model, negotiator between grandchildren and their parents, caretaker, and teacher of family traditions, culture and skills. As well, a grandparent can serve as a connection between the past and the future, provide unconditional acceptance and shape their grandchildren's attitude towards older people. Kornhaber and Woodward (1985) found that four factors were necessary to developing and maintaining a meaningful connection between grandchildren and grandparents. The availability of both time and place are crucial elements in developing a relationship with grandchildren. The grandparents need to have time free from other commitments to devote to the relationship. Moreover, the grandchild needs to be physically accessible so that a relationship can be developed. A grandchild can be inaccessible due to restrictions imposed by the grandchild's parents, physical distance, and the grandchild's other commitments. Along with time and place, there also needs to exist among the grandparent a commitment to his or her family. As articulated by Kornhaber and Woodward, "this commitment includes a sense of family history and heritage and is rooted in the conviction

that ties to family take emotional precedence over ties to society" (1985:69-70). The fourth factor is a sense of altruism. An altruistic grandparent cares about others' welfare as much as her or his own while maintaining their sense of independence. Kornhaber and Woodward's (1985) study demonstrates that time, proximity, commitment to family and altruistic personality are needed in order to develop a meaningful relationship with one's grandchildren.

The meaning of grandparenthood to a grandparent is multidimensional. Kivnick's (1982) study found five dimensions of meaning: centrality, valued elder, immortality through clan, reinvolvement with personal past, and indulgence. Centrality is comprised of three facets. First, activities and feeling pertaining to grandparenthood assume the greatest importance in a grandparent's life while everything else is given lower priority. Second, the role of grandparent is considered the grandparent's primary identity. Third, the grandparent identifies his or her grandchildren as their main reason for living. Moreover, the relationship with grandchildren becomes the main source of personal meaning or fulfillment in a grandparent's life.

The second dimension in the meaning of grandparenthood is that of a valued elder. The role of a valued elder entails imparting advice, teaching grandchildren the family history, and ensuring that the grandparent is well regarded and remembered by the grandchildren. The next dimension in the meaning of grand parenting, immortality through clan, is comprised of the grandparent's sense of duty or responsibility to the grandchildren, identifying and attributing certain characteristics of the grandchild as their own, and seeing the grandchild as someone who will carry the family line forward. The "reinvolvement with personal past" dimension of grandparenthood refers to the grandparent recalling events from their own past and remembering their grandparents. Finally, the indulgence dimension refers to the grandparent being lenient, indulgent, tolerant of grandchild's mistakes, and bestowing the children with all forms of treats. The diverse dimensions described above do not necessarily

mean that grandparents are subscribing to one or the other exclusively. Instead, grandparents may view the role of grandparenting and the meaning of grandparenthood as being comprised of each of these dimensions.

Kivnick's (1982) study demonstrates that the experience of grandparenthood contains all of these dimensions although most grandparents report greater affinity for one or two of these. The dimension they most closely identify with appears to be contingent on other factors such as age and experience with their own grandparents. The impact of these factors, along with others, on the grandparenting experience will be discussed in the following.

E. Factors Affecting the Grandparenting Experience

The remainder of this chapter will discuss variations in grandparenting related to different factors such grandparent age, geographical proximity, relationship with adult child, lineage and gender, health, socioeconomic status, and experience with their own grandparents. This component also consists of a section on surrogate grandparenting and concludes with a discussion on the limitations of the reviewed research. Since many of these variables are interrelated it is difficult and somewhat misleading to speak of each in isolation. Nonetheless, each factor has been presented alone for ease of presentation, however, it needs to be remembered that these factors are multivariate in nature. That is, these factors may operate in varying degrees with each other.

1. Age of Grandparent and Grandchildren

According to Johnson (1985), the most significant cause of variation in the grandparenting experience appears to be the age of the grandparent and grandchildren. Among grandmothers, those under the age of 65 were twice as likely to see their grandchildren than their older counterparts. The lower involvement of older grandmothers can be attributed to their declining health, along with changes in marital and work status (Johnson 1985). King and Elder's 1997 longitudinal study of rural families using the Iowa Youth and Families Project and the Iowa Single Parent Project came up with similar results.

In that study, there were greater incidences of younger grandparents being actively involved with their grandchildren. Similarly, Neugarten and Weinstein (1964) found that the "formal" style of grandparenting was more common among older grandparents. The younger grandparents were more likely to be "fun-seeker" or "distant figures."

Just as the grandparenting experience varies depending on grandparent's age, grandparent-grandchild relationship also changes with the grandchild's age. Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986) found that grandparents were more involved with their grandchildren during their pre-adolescent years. The younger years of the grandchildren were recalled with greatest fondness. The grandparents also reported that it is easier to be affectionate towards younger children. Furthermore, parents of younger children are most in need of grandparent's assistance with babysitting and parenting advice.

As discussed earlier, older grandparents are more likely to subscribe to the "formal" style of grandparenting. This may be due to the fact the older grandparents have older grandchildren who are less in need of direct contact or have less time to spend with their grandparents due to school, friends and other commitments. Nonetheless, most grandparents receive assistance from their adolescent grandchildren with errands and household chores (Cherlin and Furstenberg 1985). The relationship between a teenaged grandchild and their grandparent is more reciprocal in nature. Overall, grandparents are both recipients and providers of assistance.

To a great extent, relationships between grandparents and adult grandchildren are still a source of mystery. The limited literature that does exist on this topic suggests relationships between adult grandchildren and grandparents are largely symbolic. Grandparents are more likely to seek assistance from their adult children than adult grandchildren. Moreover, their contact with adult grandchildren appears to be largely centered on special family functions or holidays (Cherlin and Furstenberg 1985). The relationship is even more removed for those grandparents living in a different city or province from their grandchild.

There are also variations in grandparenting depending on the timing of grandparenthood. Hagestad and Burton's 1986 study examined differences among "on-time" versus "early" grandmothers. The "on-time" grandmothers became grandparents between the age of 42 and 60. On the other hand, anyone who became a grandmother before the age of 38 was classified as an "early" grandparent. The "on-time" grandmothers expressed comfort with the grandmother role and felt that they were at the right age to be a grandmother. However, the younger grandmothers felt that they were too young to be grandmothers. They explained that they believed the role of a grandmother to be an old age role. For the "on-time" grandmothers the role comes at a time when they are able to enjoy it. However, the "early" grandmothers stated that they are unable to be the grandmothers they expected or hoped to be because they are busy with "other activities and relationships such as parenting, work, education, friendships, and romantic involvements" (Hagestad and Burton 1986:480).

Moreover, Hagestad and Burton (1986) found that "on-time" grandmothers were more likely to be informed of the impending birth of a grandchild at an earlier stage than the "early" grandmothers. Hence, "on-time" grandmothers have more time to adjust and prepare for their role of grandmother. In addition, there are more peer and social supports available to "on-time" grandmothers. The availability of peers engaging in the role of a grandmother enables the new or impending grandmothers to learn of the expectations attached to this role. These grandmothers are also able to secure peer support and encouragement for conflict or difficulty resulting from the new role. On the other hand, early grandmothers are more likely to lack such support from their peers.

The effects of "early" or "off-time" grandparenting can affect other areas of life as well. For instance, due to being unprepared and unable to fulfil grandparenting roles the grandparent may become distanced and removed. This may have long-time negative effects on the grandparent-grandchild relationship. In addition, a grandmother's inability to perform the grandparenting role may create lasting conflict between the grandparent and her adult

child (Hagestad and Burton 1986). Thus, the grandmother may end up without a support network in her old age.

2. Geographical Proximity

Grandparents' contact with grandchildren is influenced by geographical distance between them. Those residing closer to the grandchildren report more personal visits and contact. Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986) argue that when grandparents are living nearby they maintain powerful influence on their adult children to visit and keep in touch.

Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986) found that geographical distance accounts for sixty-two percent of variance in the number of visits per year. However, there are other factors such as the grandparent's relationship with adult children that can reduce or eliminate grandparent-grandchild contact despite close geographical proximity. Moreover, Mueller et al. (2002) caution that greater contact does not necessarily translate into meaningful involvement.

3. Grandparental Relationships with Adult Children and In-laws

Hagestad (1985) states that the quality of any grandparent-grandchild relationship is contingent on the female in the middle generation. The grandparents' relationship with their daughter or daughter-in-law is a major determinant of the amount of contact between grandparents and their grandchildren (Cherlin and Furstenberg 1986). The daughter and daughter-in-laws are gatekeepers to the grandchildren, hence, those that do not get along with the gatekeepers will encounter difficulty accessing their grandchildren (Cherlin and Furstenberg 1986).

The adult child's divorce or separation can further compromise the grandparents' access to their grandchildren. For those grandparents who live nearby the contact usually remains intact providing they remain on good terms with whoever has custody of their grandchildren. In most cases the contact usually increases after divorce whereupon the grandparents step in to help with babysitting and financial assistance, although the

grandparents' contact with their grandchildren varies with the gender of the child undergoing divorce or separation (Johnson 1985). The grandparents have more contact with their daughter's children after divorce (Giarrusso and Silverstein 1996; Mills et al. 2001). The grandchildren's attachment to their maternal grandparents is greatly enhanced by the parents' divorce or separation. This is due to the fact that traditionally mothers have been awarded custody of children, therefore, children have greater contact with their maternal grandparents. However, paternal grandmothers are able to remain in contact with their grandchildren by maintaining an amicable relationship with their former daughter-in-law (Johnson 1985).

4. Lineage and Gender

Hagestad's (1985) study reports grandfathers as having their greatest influence on paternal grandsons while grandmothers are most involved with their maternal granddaughters. Rosenthal and Gladstone (2000) explained that the pull towards maternal grandmothers stems from the strong mother-daughter relationship in North America. Similarly, Mueller et al. (2002) found that being on the paternal side was one of the most consistent predicting factors for passive and detached grandparents. They explain that mothers may be encouraging their children to associate with their maternal grandparents. Consistently, studies have demonstrated that maternal grandparents are closer and have more contact with their grandchildren (Cherlin and Furstenberg 1986; Hagestad 1985; Mills et al. 2001). Mills et al. (2001) show that the weakest intergenerational relationship is between the paternal grandfather and his adult grandchildren. Mills et al. (2001) also indicate that the perception of closeness between adult grandchild and paternal grandfather is closer among the more educated grandchildren.

There are also differences in the grandparenting experiences stemming from the grandparents' gender. Demographically, women live longer, therefore, tend to be in the grandparent role for a longer duration then men (Rosenthal and Gladstone 2000). Also, women tend to be younger then their husbands and so become grandparents at an earlier age

then men. Moreover, grandmothers tend to be closer to their grandchildren than grandfathers (Clavan 1978; Dubas 2001; King and Elder 1997; Mills et al. 2001).

Hagestad (1985) found that grandfathers' relationships and topics of conversation with their grandchildren usually pertain to instrumental matters such as education, finding employment, money management, and personal responsibility and difficulties. On the other hand, grandmothers also talk about instrumental issues but their conversations include discussions on personal relationships, family and friends. In comparison to grandfathers, grandmothers distinguish less between their grandsons and granddaughters (Cherlin and Furstenberg 1985; Hagestad 1985; Mueller et al. 2002). Hagestad (1985) attributes this difference to a cohort effect where the females have incorporated more of the cultural values of the period than the males. The grandfathers in this study were born before 1900 and considered interpersonal relationships outside their domain (Hagestad 1985). Therefore, they felt they could contribute to their grandsons on matters pertaining to men but did not feel they had anything to contribute to their granddaughters.

Clavan (1978) uses the notion of functional centrality to explain the gender differences in grandparenting. The term functional centrality is explained as the degree of participation an extended family member has in the daily life of a nuclear family unit. In the modern society, extended family involvement is not a necessary component for the nuclear family unit to function well. However, for some families, typically in lower socioeconomic families, extended family members play a central and structural role. The structural role of a grandparent includes assistance with parenting. Thus, Clavan (1978) argues that since grandparents are valued for the parenting help they provide, this may be difficult for men to fulfil due to their socialization. However, the younger generation of men who are socialized to be more involved with parenting will be closer to their grandchildren since they will be able to provide parenting assistance to their adult children.

Finally, Mueller et al. (2002) illustrate that grandmothers are less likely to be authoritarians, however, both grandparents are more likely to be authority oriented with their female grandchild. The authors explain that these findings are congruent with gender expectations where older females exert less authority than their male counterparts and younger female grandchildren are subjected to more authority and discipline than teenage grandsons.

5. Health of Grandparents

Unfortunately, studies researching the effect of grandparent's health on the grandparent-grandchildren relationship have been inconclusive (Cherlin and Furstenberg 1985; Troll 1985). Troll (1985) argues that despite poor health grandparents can be involved to varying degrees in their grandchildren's lives. For instance, grandparents can still provide financial support and transmit family history and religious or cultural values. On the other hand, these grandparents may have greater difficulty in participating in other events such as birthdays, graduations, weddings and family vacations. Moreover, Troll (1985) states that it may be easier for grandparents with poor health to have more contact and closer relationships with their older grandchildren since older grandchildren do not require care taking. Conversely, it is physically more demanding to engage with a toddler or pre-school grandchild. Furthermore, an older grandchild can provide instrumental assistance to their grandparents or provide care for them if their health fails. However, Troll (1985) cautions that although grandchildren state greater willingness to care for their grandparents, statistics show that most caregiving is provided by spouses and adult children.

There is limited research on the impact that a grandchild's health has on the grandparent-grandchild relationship. Most research on the grandparent-grandchild relationship has exclusively focused on grandchildren who are average functioning and physically healthy. The relationship between a disabled grandchild and their grandparent has received scant attention. Baranowski and Schilmoeller's (1999) study on grandparents'

involvement with disabled grandchildren is based on responses from 150 questionnaires completed by parents of children suffering from some form of disability such as autism or cerebral palsy. The authors of this study indicate that even the most helpful grandparents initially had difficulty accepting their grandchild's disability. This initial period may be especially stressful for the parents and made more difficult through the grandparents' reaction. Nonetheless, the findings illustrate that grandparents are instrumental in the lives of the parents of the children with disabilities. The parents cited the grandparents' unconditional acceptance of the child as the greatest source of support. The second most valued role of the grandparent was their ability to provide emotional support to the parent. Grandmothers were listed as more likely to be the source of emotional support. Moreover, grandmothers provided assistance with childcare and were available for respite care with greater frequency. The grandfathers assisted to a larger extent by giving or loaning money, caregiving and engaging in activities with the child. Overall, grandparents of a child with disabilities have an important symbolic and functional role in the family. The results of this study do not allow us to determine whether these grandparents would have been just as involved if the child did not have any disability.

6. Grandparental Socioeconomic Status (Education and Employment)

Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986) argue that class, as determined by education and family income, does not have any significant effect on the grandparent-grandchild relationship. However, findings from various studies have found contradictory evidence. First, King and Elder's (1997) study indicates that educated grandparents had less contact with their grandchildren and were more likely to engage in activities such as discussing a grandchild's future. King and Elder's (1997) findings stem from a longitudinal study of rural families in Iowa. Therefore, the results from this community may not be applicable to the general population. Second, Mueller et al. (2002) found that employed grandmothers were more likely engage in the influential grandparent role. Influential grandparents are highly

involved in all aspects of grandparenting. These grandparents score highest on all of the following scales: contact, shared activities, intimacy, helping, instrumental assistance, and authority.

In stark contrast to Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986), Clavan (1978) argues social class has a very real impact on the grandparenting experience. According to Clavan (1978), the role of a grandparent is more "ideological" for the middle class while it is "real" for the working class. Clavan (1978) defines the ideological role as one in which the role of the grandparent exists without any prescribed duties or expectations attached to it. Therefore, the grandparent role for the middle class is essentially a "roleless role." Clavan (1978) explains that the middle class parents' lack of clear understanding of what the grandparent role entails means that they have to construct the role for themselves.

On the other hand, working class families have the grandparent role more clearly defined. Childcare is a highly needed service for many working class families that grandmothers are able to fulfil freeing parents to work towards financial prosperity or in some cases, survival. The data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) panel conducted between April and July 1997 by the U.S Census Bureau found that grandparents provide regular care for twenty-one percent of preschoolers and fifteen percent of children between the ages of five to fourteen years (Smith 2002). The numbers are even higher among Hispanics (30.8%), African American (32.2%) and Asian and Pacific Islanders (34.2%). These results demonstrate that these three groups rely heavily on grandparents for child-care. A structural explanation points to constraints such as racism and low income as the reason certain groups utilize kin-based care. On the other hand, a cultural explanation states that racial/ethnic families prefer to have their children in their relatives' care due to their shared cultural values. On their own, both of these explanations are insufficient in explaining childcare arrangements. Uttal's (1999) study provides another explanation for kin-based care among ethnic minorities. This study reveals that kin-based care also serves the

economic needs of extended family members. Caregiving provides relatives who lack opportunities to enter the formal labour market a viable source for income. In summary, the grandparenting experience is influenced by the socioeconomic status of both grandparents and parents (adult children). As well, factors such as race and cultural values also influence the grandparenting roles and styles engaged in by grandparents.

7. Grandparental Marital Status

The issue of grandparents' marital status has received very little attention among researchers. As discussed later in the surrogate parenting component of this chapter, many minority surrogate grandparents are single. In addition, since women have traditionally married older men and have lower mortality rates, there is an increased probability of grandmothers being a single grandparent (Rosenthal and Gladstone 2000). The implication of the widowhood and divorce of grandparents on the grandparenting experience has not been investigated adequately.

8. Grandparent's Experience as a Grandchild

King and Elder (1997) found that the grandparent's experience as a grandchild impacts the grandparent's current grandparent-grandchild relationship. Those individuals who knew their grandparents engaged in more activities with their grandchildren, provided more instrumental assistance, were more likely to act as a mentor and companion, had a greater sense of knowing their grandchildren, and were more likely to engage in conversations with their grandchildren about problems and future plans (King and Elder 1997). However, the effect of intergenerational history is moderated by geographical distance. To elaborate, regardless of how positive one's experience may have been with their grandparents, if that individual lives far away from their grandchildren their contact and ability to engage in a meaningful relationship with grandchildren will be curtailed (King and Elder 1997).

9. Surrogate Parenting

As discussed earlier, Neugarten and Weinstein (1964) classified grandparents into five groups: formal, fun-seeker, surrogate, reservoir of family wisdom, and distant figure. Recent studies show that the incidence of surrogate parenting is increasing by grandparents (Edwards 1998; Kluger and Aprea 1999; Landry 2000; Phillips and Bloom 1998; Waytiuck 2001). There has been a 44% increase in the United States over the last decade in the number of children residing with their grandparents or other relatives (Fuller-Thomson et al. 1997). Kluger and Aprea state that "...over 1.35 million children in the U.S are being raised solely by grandparents..." (1999:5). As illustrated by the figures above, the grandparent role is being redefined and renegotiated to meet the needs of contemporary families.

Grandparents are stepping in to care for their grandchildren due to parental drug or alcohol addiction, incarceration, AIDS, mental illness, neglect or abuse of the children, teen pregnancy, divorce, parents returning to school or being unable to provide care due to employment. Phillips and Bloom (1998) also attribute changes in legislation and social policies as causes of this phenomenon. For example, they explain that changes in criminal justice policy that impose harsher penalties on drug related crimes have resulted in a drastic increase in the number of women being jailed (Phillips and Bloom 1998). Since the majority of the women are mothers, the children are informally placed in their grandparents' care. Changes in the child welfare system are also credited with an increase in the number of grandparents raising grandchildren. The child welfare system is increasingly adhering to the ideology that children need to be placed in the least disruptive and natural environment where family connection and relationships can be maintained. Thus, grandparents are often asked to care for their grandchildren when the parents are unable to fulfil their parental duties.

While the researchers cite social and legislative changes as the cause of grandparents undertaking the role of primary caregivers of their grandchildren, the grandparents have their

own reasons for assuming care of their grandchildren. The majority state a desire to provide a safe and loving home for their grandchildren and fear of losing the child to the child welfare system as the primary reasons for taking their grandchildren into their homes. The grandparents also report feeling obligated to care for family members. Other grandparents assume this role due to "...moral or religious beliefs..." (Edwards 1998:173).

Despite the various reasons or motivations behind caring for their grandchildren, the consequences or the impact of caregiving appears to be similar for most grandparents. Overall, these grandparents report higher rates of stress, anxiety, depression, health problems, financial difficulties, and social isolation. The grandparents also struggle with shame, anger and resentment regarding their situation. The grandparents caring for children with behavioral or health problems have a higher incidence of anxiety, depression, stress and health problems. Reports also indicate that grandparents, upon assuming a parental role with their grandchildren, experience role confusion. They are uncertain as to whether they are the grandparents or parents of these children. Due to daily caregiving responsibilities these grandparents are unable to have the relationship with their grandchildren that they anticipated. They are unable to engage in the role they associate with being a grandparent such as spoiling the children by buying them things or taking them to fun activities.

The grandparents also report feelings of resentment and anger towards their adult children for their lack of responsibility or inability to care for their own children. Minkler (1999) argues that grandparents raising grandchildren is increasingly becoming a poor women's issue, as grandmothers caring for their grandchildren are more likely to have low income (Fuller-Thompson et al. 1997, Landry 2000). Moreover, there is a greater probability of African American grandmothers in the U.S. providing care to their grandchildren (Minkler 1999, Pebley and Rudkin 1999). Therefore, the grandparenting experience tends to be both gendered and ethno-specific. The literature reviewed urges for policy changes and implementation of services to aid these grandparents.

It needs to be investigated whether Canadian grandparents are also increasingly providing primary care to their grandchildren. Unfortunately, while every attempt was made to secure and evaluate information on Canadian grandparents and Canadian immigrant grandparents, the search for journal articles on various online library databases proved to be unsuccessful. My assertions regarding the lack of Canadian research on the issue of grandparents raising grandchildren was recently reinforced by James Gladstone of McMaster University's School of Social Work. Gladstone states that "there is a huge gap in Canadian information on the subject; there are not even any Canadian estimates of the number of grandparents raising their grandchildren" (Waytiuk 2001:36). Gladstone goes on to state that "...virtually all research along..." with literature, self-help information and Internet support groups are from the United States (Waytiuk 2001:36). There almost appears to be ignorance if not a complete lack of concern about the plight of Canadian grandparents by both researchers and policy makers. As stated by a grandparent, "our communities are just not set to even see, much less respond to grandparents in these roles" (Waytiuk 2001:40).

F. Limitations

Among academics, discourse on grandparenting has mainly centered on North American grandparents and grandchildren. An evident and extremely limiting aspect of most of the studies cited above is that they were conducted on Euro-American population in the United States. Therefore, applicability of the results to other groups is limited. These studies have ignored grandparents belonging to other races and cultures. This is hugely evident in Canada where there has been virtually no research done on the impact that grandparents' race, ethnic background or religion has on their grandparenting experience. There are some studies in the United States that examine variance among racial groups but most of these studies have concentrated on the African American and Hispanic populations. These two groups have been consistently compared to the Euro-American groups and studies report on how these groups deviate from the North American "norm" as represented by the Euro-

American samples. The impact of religion on grandparenting has primarily centered on Judaism and Christianity. As indicated above, more research on cultural and ethnic variation among grandparents is needed.

Existing research on immigrant families has mainly focused on integration difficulties and isolation of seniors. Some studies have referred to immigrant grandparents in passing when discussing intergenerational conflict due to cultural differences between grandparents and grandchildren. However, information is missing on how new immigrants see their relationship with their grandchildren. What significance does their grandparenting role have for them and their grandchildren? How does the middle generation contribute to or restrict this relationship? Finally, how does the grandparent role vary with immigrant grandparents' gender, marital status, employment status, proficiency of language, education, grandchild's age, sex of grandchild, and lineage? Moreover, most studies generating information on styles of grandparenting have been conducted on Euro-American middle class individuals. It remains to be seen whether the grandparenting styles identified apply to other groups or whether immigrant groups have their own unique styles of grandparenting.

G. Conclusion

As presented in this chapter, the role of grandparent is dependent on a variety of factors such as grandparent's age, geographical proximity, gender, lineage, socioeconomic status and relationship with an individual's own grandparent. Moreover, the grandparent role is meaningful and important to most grandparents and their grandchildren. The role is even more significant now when more and more grandparents, particularly grandmothers, are stepping in as surrogate parents to care for their grandchildren. The research conducted to date has been extremely informative, however, more research in needed on different segments of Canadian population such as diverse ethnic, racial and immigrant groups.

Chapter 3: Methodology

A. Introduction

This research was undertaken to explore the grandparenting experience of Indo-Fijian women residing in Canada. Due to the exploratory nature of this research, a qualitative method was selected. As explained by Marshall in the Oxford Dictionary of Sociology (1998), qualitative methodology is commonly associated with interpretive epistemology and refers to forms of data collection and analysis that focus on understanding the phenomena under investigation with a particular emphasis on meaning. As mentioned earlier, information about Indo-Fijian immigrant women in Canada and their grandparenting experiences is lacking. Thus, a qualitative technique is appropriate for this research since this methodology enables us to understand and describe social phenomena and, more importantly, develop theories that provide explanation of what is being observed.

This chapter commences with a discussion of qualitative research technique. This is followed by a list of research questions used to guide this study. Section D presents this study's research design. The chapter concludes with an in-depth discussion regarding the strengths and limitations of the present study.

B. Qualitative Research Technique

Qualitative methodology is comprised of three main components (Strauss and Corbin 1998). The data collected from various sources such as interviews, documents, records and observation form the first component. This is followed by data analysis. Data analysis consists of four steps: comprehension of the data, synthesis or decontextualization, theorizing and recontextualization (Morse and Field 1995). The third component entails writing up the results and disseminating information through publication, conference, and lecture.

As described above, qualitative research has three main components: data collection, data analysis and dissemination of findings. Upon completion of data collection the researcher begins analyzing the data. The first stage of data analysis is comprehension, which

involves gaining an in-depth, detailed and clear understanding of the data. This is usually achieved by combing through the data line by line. This process is often referred to as intraparticipant microanalysis or line by line analysis (Morse and Field 1995). In this stage, first level coding of data is done, where each line is analyzed and a corresponding descriptive term is listed in the right hand margin. This step concludes when the researcher reaches the point of saturation and nothing new is learned from the data.

The second step, synthesis of data, involves the researcher making generalizations about the participants based upon the data. As described by Morse and Field (1995:127) synthesis provides the researcher with "the ability to provide with confidence, composite descriptions of how people act or are able to relate or respond… and the ability to provide specific stories as examples to illustrate the generalization." This level of synthesis is often achieved through selective coding which entails recategorizing and identifying the relationships among the categories found in the initial coding of the data.

The next step of analysis is theorizing. Theory provides qualitative results with structure, applicability, and connection with the larger body of knowledge (Morse and Field 1995). Theory is developed by synthesis of data and brings together various conclusions in a coherent manner so as to provide an explanatory model. This is a complicated and complex step which involves sorting and resorting data in an effort to present the most coherent and comprehensive explanation for the findings. Theorizing can be aided by the following methods, first, by linking data from the research to theory. The second technique is finding similar concepts in other research (Morse and Field 1995). The third involves developing a theory that is grounded in the data, thus called grounded theory. Glaser and Strauss first coined and utilized the term grounded theory (1967). "The primary purpose of grounded theory is to generate explanatory models of human behavior that is grounded in the data" (Morse and Field 1995:157). Researchers adhering to this technique do not enter the field with a particular theory to test rather they allow the theory to emanate from the research data.

Therefore, "grounded theories, because they are drawn from data, are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action" (Strauss and Corbin 1998:12).

The final step of analysis involves recontexualizing. Recontextualization is making the theory, generated by the data, general enough to be applicable to other contexts, communities and cultures. This is the most crucial step for researchers and academics since placing their work in the larger context serves as a valuable addition or contribution to the existing knowledge. The importance of this step cannot be underestimated since the presentation of the results has the possibility of radically changing or altering the most commonly and widely held beliefs or practices in society.

As indicated above, qualitative methodology has the potential of producing rich, insightful and original research. However in qualitative research the researcher serves as an instrument, thus, there exists the possibility of subjectivity entering the research and tainting the results. As stated by Morse and Field (1995:141-142) "the amount and quality of the data and the depth of analysis depend on the ability of the researcher." If the researcher is considered by the respondents to be unfriendly or untrustworthy they will be hesitant in sharing their experiences, which in turn greatly reduces the quality of the information gathered in the interview. Moreover, the researcher has to be observant and vigilant about recording nonverbal cues such as hesitation, lack of eye contact, long pauses, sighs, avoidance and crying. If these important information are not properly recorded and analyzed alongside the interview transcript, crucial data that has the ability to give research more depth and insight may be lost. Finally, the quality of information elicited in the interview depends on the researcher's ability to decipher and unearth the meaningful leads provided in the participants' responses. It is important to note that unlike empirical research, qualitative research does not advocate that there is a single objective truth that needs to be discovered through the study. Rather, qualitative research accepts that each person's experience and

perception of a situation or event will be different, therefore, the researcher's objective is to accurately record and report the various unique experiences of the respondents.

C. Research Questions

The semi-structured questionnaire (Appendix 1) utilized in this study was constructed to elicit information about the following research questions:

1. How has the role of grandmother changed in the Canadian context compared to the Fijian context?
2. How has immigrating to or living in Canada impacted the grandmother's relationship with her grandchildren?
3. What are the duties or expectations of the grandmother role?
4. What types of support do grandmothers provide to and receive from their grandchildren?
5. What meaning do grandmothers attach to being a grandmother?
6. How does the grandmothering role facilitate or hinder integration into Canadian society?

D. Research Design

1. Sample

In accordance with the qualitative methodology the sample size for this research was kept small and interviewing ceased upon saturation. Eleven participants were interviewed for this research. While saturation was achieved by the eighth interview, three more interviews were conducted to ensure all pertinent data had been collected.

The respondents were selected according to the following criteria: female, Indo-Fijian immigrant, with at least one grandchild in Canada. It follows that all participants are of South Asian culture. The participants ranged in age from 45 to 68 years of age. The researcher's parents contacted the subjects for the research since initial attempts to contact respondents through a snowball technique failed. This will be elaborated on in the strengths and limitations section.

2. Consent

The interviews commenced with respondents being informed about the study in Hindi. The respondents were also asked to read and sign a consent form in English. They were also provided with a Hindi copy of the consent form. Since a majority of the participants were unable to read English or Hindi, the consent form was read and explained to them in Hindi by the interviewer. The signed consent form was stored in a confidential and secure location. In addition to the written consent form, it was verbally stressed to the participants that their involvement in this study was strictly voluntary and they could terminate the interview at any time. This message was repeated if the respondent appeared stressed or emotionally troubled during the interview. The interviews were taped with the consent of the respondents. The recorded tapes were identified through numbers.

3. Context

In order to ensure confidentiality the researcher attempted to schedule the interviews at a time when the respondent would be able to meet in private. The respondents were provided with a choice of being interviewed in the researcher's office, the respondent's home or in a mall. All interviews took place at the respondents' homes. Despite the researcher's endeavor to meet in private, some respondents' had their son or daughter-in-law present for the interview. The implication of the additional party's presence during the interview will be discussed in greater detail in the strengths and limitations section.

4. Interview

The semi-structured format of interviewing was chosen because it allows the researcher to aggregate the consequential data without compromising the respondent's sovereignty to express the phenomena under investigation in her own words. Moreover, the interviews were conducted in Hindi to further promote the respondents' comfort and ease in narrating their experiences.

In order to create rapport with the respondents, the interviews commenced with demographic questions such as date of birth, place of birth, number of children and marital status. Many of these simple questions led to in-depth discussions of issues such as poverty, gender stratification, integration, and immigration experience. Most respondents were quite open with the researcher during the interviews. However, with the exception of two, the respondents were vague in their responses in respect to their relationship with their daughters-in-law. Therefore, hypothetical cases were used to achieve an understanding of the respondents' relationships with their daughters-in-law. The respondents' cautious demeanor can be attributed to their culture as well as to their apprehension about the researcher's liberal stance. This will be elaborated on in the strengths and limitations component of this chapter.

5. Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously in this study. Each interview was translated and transcribed in English after the interview by the researcher. The translation was undertaken with every attempt to preserve the integrity of the information provided. The questions had been originally translated into Hindi with the aid of several community members who are proficient in the written aspect of the language.

The semi-structured questionnaire utilized by the researcher was modified during the course of research upon discovery that certain questions were causing confusion among the respondents. Therefore, the questions were constantly clarified and reworked to ensure that the proper meaning was relayed during the interview.

An audit trail was kept by means of the researcher's notes regarding the context, limitations, challenges in the field, along with the new ideas or insights emerging from the data. This was done immediately after each interview. The transcriptions, questionnaires, consent forms and audit trail documents were stored in the computer and a backup was kept on a computer disk and in the form of printed copies.

The analysis of the data was initiated with line by line examination of the transcripts. This was followed by a second and third reading in which general themes and issues were grouped together and analyzed until a core category was discovered. Verification of the core category and the resulting theory was done by re-reading all of the interview transcripts to see if the emerging theory fit the data.

E. Strengths and Limitations

1. Interviewer

All interviews were conducted, transcribed and translated by the researcher. The researcher is a twenty-eight year old female graduate student of Indo-Fijian descent. While the researcher is of the same ethnic and cultural background as the respondents, she still encountered several difficulties stemming from her marginal status within this community. The Indo-Fijian community residing in Edmonton is quite small in number and most members are intimately acquainted and knowledgeable of each other's lifestyle, background and family circumstance. The researcher's independent lifestyle is not congruent with the cultural norms associated with her gender and age. For instance, the researcher is pursuing post-secondary education and is single. Moreover, the researcher is dating someone from a different religious and cultural background. This has resulted in daughters or daughter-in-law being instructed by their mother or mothers-in-law not to associate with the researcher in fear that the researcher may influence the younger women to abandon their cultural values in favor of a western lifestyle.

At first, it seemed that the shared cultural and ethnic background allowed the researcher immediate access to this segment of the population. Initially everyone contacted agreed to the interview but when they were reached at a latter date to schedule an appointment the respondents were evasive. As stated earlier, the hesitance can be attributed to the researcher's insider/outsider status within this community. The apprehensive state of the respondents may stem from their wariness of the researcher. Sensing the respondent's

misgivings and concern, the researcher asked for her parents to intervene in her behalf. The researcher's parents are perceived as trustworthy and are very well liked within this community. Therefore, they contacted the participants and informed them of the research topic. They also reassured the participants that the findings will be kept confidential. Once it was learnt by the community that the researcher's parents were supportive of the research, people agreed to meet with her for the interviews.

In spite of the assurance by the researcher's parents, two of the participants remained apprehensive about meeting with the researcher and, thus, had their daughter-in-law or son present during the interview. When the researcher was scheduling the appointment she had specifically instructed the respondent of the desire and importance for interviewing in private. The respondents had in turn provided the researcher with a time when they would be alone and available for meeting in private with the researcher. Upon arriving at the respondents' homes and after attempts to reschedule the appointment failed, the researcher proceeded to interview the respondent with the family member present. However, the researcher waited to ask the respondent about her relationship with her son or daughter-in-law until that family member was occupied by tasks such as getting tea or answering the phone. However, the presence of the son or daughter-in-law did not appear to hinder the interview. In fact, in both cases, the family member's endorsement of the researcher led to the respondents' being quite open and forthcoming about their experiences. They elaborated more and, with the family member's encouragement, were willing to share specific experiences pertaining to the questions being asked.

In addition, it appears that the researcher's reputation in the community of being a feminist may have contributed to the respondents' guarded responses to questions regarding their relationship with their daughters-in-law. Among the eleven participants, only two were open about their relationship with their daughters-in-law. Both of these respondents know and like the researcher, therefore, they were more willing to share their experiences. However,

most of the respondents were less forthcoming. In order to circumvent this issue, they were asked questions about hypothetical cases and information about their relationship with their daughters-in-law was gathered indirectly through this means. It is also interesting to note that due to the researcher's insider status, she was already aware of the conflicts that exist among each of these respondents and their daughters-in-law. Therefore, the researcher was able to ask general questions addressing these issues in a culturally appropriate manner. The researcher's intimate knowledge of the culture and knowing what and how to ask served to be instrumental in getting crucial data. Moreover, this allowed the respondents' opportunity and forum to allude to the disharmony present in the family without breaking the cultural values of presenting an ideal front.

The shared culture of the respondent and interviewer was helpful in noticing and following up on the cultural cues provided by the participant. For example, although the respondents were constantly reminded that they could stop the interview at any time, instead of asking to end the interview they would allude to housework or chores that needed to be done. Also, if the respondents were asked a sensitive question regarding their family they would respond by asking about the researcher's family or would ask the researcher the same question. In such instances, the researcher would either reword the questions or would break down that question into smaller more specific questions to be asked until that issue was discussed to satisfaction.

While the refusal or hesitance to answer a question was sometimes intentional, at other times it was unintentional and result of the respondent not understanding the question or being afraid of providing the wrong answer. Therefore, the researcher constantly reminded the respondents that in the interview there were no incorrect or correct answers and was mindful of the fact that these women are not very educated and their advice is seldom sought in this community. The role of being an informant was new to them and they required reassurance that their input was valuable to the researcher.

The respondents' familiarity and knowledge of the Hindi vocabulary needed to express abstract ideas or feelings were a source of limitation. Therefore, most questions were kept on a concrete level and dealt with specifics relating to that respondent's life. For example, instead of asking for their opinion of Canada upon arrival, they were asked about their experiences in regard to the weather, people, houses, food and clothing.

2. Language

Both the researcher and the respondents were fluent and articulate in conversational Hindi but lack the language to discuss abstract ideas or theories. For example, during the research it was discovered that both the researcher and the respondents encountered tremendous difficulty when attempting to explain their feelings in Hindi. This is due to the fact that the culture does not advocate or promote the discussion of feelings so the speakers of the language are not socialized to use the language for that purpose. Furthermore, the women interviewed have not been educated or socialized to use the language to discuss abstract ideas or formulations and, thus, as demonstrated in the interviews, would experience difficulty engaging in such discussions about theoretical findings. The inability of the interviewer to articulate sociological theories in Hindi coupled with the respondents' lack of proficiency impedes the researcher's capacity to obtain theoretical verification of the findings.

3. Confidentiality

The issue of confidentiality further complicates the task of theoretical verification. Due to the fact that this is a small community, all respondents are knowledgeable and aware of each other. Therefore, concern exists that if the respondents are not pleased with the findings they may reproach certain individuals for the results. Another concern relating to this particular study is that the information presented in the result section regarding daughters-in-law could further aggravate already tense relationships.

F. Conclusion

Due to the lack of information on Indo-Fijian grandmothers, qualitative methodology was deemed the most appropriate and effective technique for conducting this exploratory research. As indicated in this chapter, the researcher's insider status served to be both a strength and source of limitation in this study. As well, difficulties arouse from language and translation problems. However, despite these limitations, information from these eleven interviews resulted in rich and meaningful data on the grandmothering experience of Indo-Fijian immigrants in Canada. These findings will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Results

A. Demographic and Social Characteristics

1. Age

The grandmothers interviewed for this study ranged in age from 45 to 68 years. Interestingly, four of the respondents were uncertain of their age. They attributed this to their lack of education or old age. Some of the respondents called on their children or daughter-in-law for this information while others asked the researcher to calculate their age based on their date of birth.

2. Proximity, Age and Number of Grandchildren

All of the respondents interviewed are grandmothers and two are great-grandmothers. For the majority of the respondents most of their grandchildren reside here. However, some grandchildren are residing in Australia and Fiji as well. The age of the grandchildren ranged from one to thirty years of age. The number of grandchildren ranged from one to twenty-one. One of the respondents also has eight great grandchildren. The grandmothers' contact with their grandchildren living in Edmonton varies from daily to weekly visits. All respondents provide some form of care for their grandchildren.

3. Education

The education level for these grandmothers is quite low. Two of the respondents have no formal education. The educational level for the remaining grandmothers ranged from grade one to eight. Some of the respondents did not have the opportunity to obtain education due to unavailability of school in their local village or area in Fiji. A few of the respondents were sent to school located at a distance. However, they were taken out of school upon entering adolescence because of their parents' fear that the daughters may be sexually assaulted or molested on the way to and from school. There also existed a predominant apprehension among their parents that educated daughters would be at increased risk of finding their own mate and rebelling. At the other extreme, there also existed concern that

educated females would encounter difficulty finding a suitable mate due to their excessive schooling.

The majority of these grandmothers grew up in Fiji in relative poverty and had a large number of siblings. The older children were often taken out of school to help out around the house or farm and to care for the younger children. As well, due to their economic state, most of the parents could only educate a few children and always the children of choice were sons. Some of the respondents were taken out of school so that their younger brothers could be educated. This was coupled with the fact that education was not deemed to be beneficial for women. It was believed that women did not require education in their married life. As stated by respondent # 11, "you know how it is, education does not matter for girls. It is more important for them to wash dishes and do housework. At that time in Fiji girls did not go to high school. They went up to grade eight and then they would stay at home until marriage." All of the respondents expressed regret and sadness at their lack of education. They attribute their limited financial and employment opportunities to their lack of formal education. They explained that they are unable to attend school now due to their financial obligations, employment status, caregiving responsibilities and/or lack of transportation.

4. Marital Status

Among the grandmothers interviewed, six are married and five are widowed. All of the grandmothers report that either their parents or relatives arranged their marriage. The age of marriage for these grandmothers ranges from early teens to early twenties. The husband serves an extremely important role in respondents' lives. These women are financially supported by their husbands and are dependent on their spouse for transportation, emotional support, companionship and status within the community.

The majority of Indo-Fijian widowed women reside with and are dependent on their married son, and in some instances their married daughter. Their financial and social dependency on their son or daughter restricts their ability to make and exercise choices in

their life. This dependency increases their vulnerability to mistreatment. As explained by respondent # 12, because she is a widow, "if someone says something then I listen and calmly bear it." She further explains that if the husband is available then the husband and wife can move out of their children's home and into their own place. As indicated above, the presence of a spouse provides the women in this community with both social and financial resources necessary to leave an undesirable living arrangement.[2]

5. Duration of Stay in Canada

The duration of stay in Canada is also a factor in decreasing the grandmother's sense of dependency on her spouse, children and other relatives. Those that have resided in Canada for a longer period are more aware of services and resources in the community that will allow them to reside on their own. These respondents also express greater willingness to reside alone.

The respondents' duration of stay in Canada ranges from one to twenty-six years. Two of the respondents arrived in Canada less than two years ago and one has been a resident for six years. The remainder of the respondents have resided in Canada for ten years and longer. Their sons sponsored a majority of the respondents to Canada. Only one respondent reported being sponsored by her daughter. Two of the respondents arrived in Canada as refugees. During the time of the interviews, seven of the respondents were Canadian citizens, three were permanent residents and one was awaiting decision on her sponsorship application. All respondents cited financial security as their prime motivation for immigrating to Canada. The respondents explained that there are greater educational and employment opportunities for themselves and their children in Canada. The respondents who have resided in Canada longer expressed greater tolerance for a non-traditional lifestyle, were more proficient in English, and reported being in regular contact with a greater number of

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[2] The living arrangement of these respondents will be discussed in greater detail in Family Structure and Living Arrangement component of this chapter.

friends. The majority of the respondents reported a low proficiency level in English. Furthermore, while most are able to comprehend and speak some English they are limited in their ability to read. Limited English language ability is a major hindrance in the respondents' ability to navigate[3].

As stated earlier, among the respondents, those that have resided in Canada for a longer duration reported a greater number of friends that do not belong to their immediate family. Moreover, these women listed a larger number of people that they visit or talk to on a regular basis. Interestingly, all the employed respondents stated that they are friends with people at work. Nonetheless, none of the respondents socialize with their co-workers outside of work. Overall, the respondents social networks appear to be limited to their extended family members and individuals within the Indo-Fijian community. For some of the respondents their social network is further limited to members of their specific ethnicity and religion.

6. Religious Affiliation

The Indo-Fijians adhere to one of these three main religions: Hinduism, Islam or Christianity. In Canada, North and South Indians compose the two largest factions of the Indo-Fijian community. The individuals interviewed for this study are representative of the religious and ethnic composition of the Indo-Fijian community. As indicated by their titles, North and South Indians trace their origin to a specific part of India and observe the cultural and religious practices associated with that area. The women interviewed stated that attendance at religious events, prayer ceremonies at church, temple or at someone's home, weddings and other cultural events comprise the majority of their social outings. Events such as those listed above present them with opportunity to meet and socialize with members of

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[3] The term navigate is used to refer to the respondents' ability to get around town in order to carry out necessary chores such as shopping, paying bills, going to the bank and travelling to work. The term navigate is used instead of integrate in this instance due to the researcher's findings that for these women ability to survive in Canadian society through practical skills such as getting around town, going to work, etc is more pertinent than achieving integration in the traditional sense of the word.

their community. Due to the nature of these events those attending these functions tend to belong to the same religious and ethnic background. Therefore, the resulting friendships and social contacts tend to be limited to people from the same ethnic and religious background. There also appears to be some preference and bias in favor of associating with people of similar ethnicity and religion.

Another factor limiting the women's opportunity to form relationships outside of their community and extended family is the cultural belief that women should limit their relationships to select family and community members. Women are socialized to believe that respectable women do not associate with individuals outside of the extended family unit. This was revealed during the interview when all respondents underreported the amount of time they spent on social interactions with other women. Due to the researcher's insider status she was aware that the majority of the respondents speak with other women daily, however, when asked how often they spoke to their friends in the community all of the respondents stated once a month. When asked for clarification the respondents did acknowledge that they have regular contact with other women in the community.

7. Mobility

The cultural belief of remaining in the private sphere also serves to discourage these women from being mobile or travelling alone. The majority of the respondents voiced fear of travelling alone. Among the eleven women interviewed two have a driver's license. However, only one of the respondents stated that she is comfortable driving and is able to get around the city by herself. The other woman explained that she needs someone to accompany her and even then she does not drive outside the local enclave. The non-driving respondents rely on their husband, children, daughters-in-law and grandchildren for transportation. The availability of transportation is a paramount issue for these women. As articulated by respondent # 11, "…they would be isolated inside the house. If they want to go somewhere they need to drive. Life is good for those that know how to drive." As stated earlier, not

being able to drive or get around the city alone increases the dependence of these women on their spouse and children.

For some respondents' the lack of a driver's license is compensated by their ability to speak English and/or having funds to travel by taxi. Those that are able to speak English can travel on the bus or ask for directions. In addition, those that are financially able to afford a taxi are able to decrease their isolation by going to malls, grocery stores or ethnic shops alone.

8. Employment Status

Only three of the women interviewed are employed full-time. Two of these women are employed as housekeepers while one works in a factory. Due to their employment status none of these women provide care for their grandchildren. All of these women prefer outside employment over providing childcare. Respondent # 10 explained, "...if I work I will have money and I can do my own thing." As indicated by the above quote, the respondents indicate a preference for financial independence as this allows them greater opportunity to maintain personal autonomy. It is also interesting to note that none of these respondents held outside employment in Fiji. Moreover, they have been consistently employed upon their arrival to Canada. All of these women initially entered the paid labor force due to financial necessity. In contrast, currently these grandmothers pursue employment in order to accumulate savings and to have access to funds for travelling and other personal expenses. According to the women interviewed the primary responsibility for the household expenses falls on their husband and/or son.

At present, four of the grandmothers are receiving a pension from the Canadian government. All four of these respondents are widowed and are residing with their sons. None of the respondents are aware as to the exact title of the pension they are collecting. Three of the respondents use this income solely for personal expenditures such as travelling, gifts, clothing and medicine. However, this is not the case with all of the respondents. One of

the respondents reported that she is responsible for power and telephone bills. Overall, it appears that these women mainly use their pension for personal expenditures but they do provide financial assistance to their son that they are residing with. It is interesting to note that of those receiving a pension only one is still caregiving for her grandchildren. In this case caregiving was warranted due to the death of the respondent's daughter-in-law. The other two respondents stopped caregiving as soon as they started receiving their pension. One of the respondents never did provide child-care due to health reasons.

The remaining four women interviewed provide regular childcare for their grandchildren in their homes. All of these grandmothers are dependent on their son or husband (where available) for financial support. One of the respondents receives $100 from each of her children for providing before and after school care to four grandchildren. None of the respondents reported taking on the caregiving role after a discussion or agreement regarding this role. It appears that the grandmothers took on the responsibility willingly. Furthermore, most of these women are not reimbursed monetarily for their labour. In return the adult children pay for household expenses, airfare, health care, clothing, and so on.

B. Family Structure and Living Arrangement

The living arrangement of respondents previous to migrating to Canada consists of both nuclear and extended family units. Most respondents report living with their in-laws after marriage. This living arrangement meant that the respondents were responsible for the household duties and cared for all family members, including their husband's unmarried siblings. This form of living arrangement is quite prevalent and is encouraged by the Indo-Fijian culture. The culture dictates that the married son resides with his parents while the daughter is to reside with her in-laws. While traditionally all of the sons resided with their parents, in contemporary times, due to migration and immigration, parents are usually left with only one son that stays behind to care for them. Often the oldest or the youngest son

stays on to care for his parents. Ideally, the elderly parents retain control and authority over the household and family members.

The respondents reported that in Fiji their social needs were met within the husband's family and that caring for family members kept them busy and occupied. Furthermore, other female members or neighbors with whom they could confide and socialize surrounded them constantly. The respondents also reported that in Fiji they were able to navigate and travel alone.

In contrast to Fiji, for some of these women, travelling alone in Canada is a source of confusion and stress. As articulated by respondent # 3, " …in Fiji you can go but here can't go anywhere alone." Some report being unable to travel due to language difficulty while others state that public transportation is not accessible due to their health. Most of the older respondents reported difficulty walking and climbing steps on the bus. The cold weather is also a source of limitation. They are not comfortable outdoors during winter. As mentioned earlier, those respondents who are financially secure and/or able to speak English report higher levels of independence and mobility. The lack of extended family network and reduced mobility in Canada has led to isolation for some of the respondents. As explained by respondent # 3, "I miss everyone…over there we didn't stay silent. We would talk and laugh. Over here we can't talk or laugh."

The socialization needs of the Indo-Fijian population in Fiji in general appears to be facilitated by the structure and design of their house, landscape and the tropical environment. For instance, some respondents reported the presence of a shed-like structure which was made out of straw and located in their front yard where they would sit during the day after completion of their housework. There women of the house would socialize with neighbors. This practice is largely adhered to by Indo-Fijians residing in the western portion of Viti

Levu[4]. Those originating from the east of the island reported sitting under a tree during midday and early afternoon and visiting with neighbors and friends. Thus, living in Canada required some getting used to. The respondents reported being dismayed at the prospect of being indoors all day and having the doors closed. Upon arrival they felt isolated since they were unable to communicate with their neighbors or visit with family members. Therefore, the phone lines remain the main source of socialization or communication for those respondents who are not employed outside of their homes. As explained by respondent # 3, "...now it is a habit. I am used to it (being alone) now. How can you go somewhere? If you know how to drive then you are able do so but you can't go anywhere alone over here."

Most of the respondents, with the exception of two, reside with their sons. Those respondents with a spouse and those that have resided in Canada for a longer duration displayed greater flexibility and willingness to reside alone (without their son). On the other hand, widowed and recent immigrants were less willing to move out and expressed concern about losing their son's support. The latter expressed greater desire for the traditional living arrangement where son resides with parents. Respondent # 3 shares her experience, " when my son moved out it was very troubling because we came through his support and were expecting his help. How will we live in a new place? We didn't know anything about here."

There is an interesting development in the living arrangement of Indo-Fijians residing in Canada. In order to accommodate the traditional living arrangement some respondents are choosing to purchase homes that allow for her son and family to live downstairs while the respondent and her husband reside upstairs or vice-versa. Both families maintain different households but live together in order to present an ideal picture to the community of being a traditional family. There are other advantages to living together. For instance, grandparents are available to care for grandchildren, there is sharing of household expenses and mortgage

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[4] Viti Levu is one of the two main islands in Fiji. All of the respondents interviewed resided in different parts of Viti Levu previous to immigrating to Canada.

and elderly parents have a sense of security knowing that their son is close by if needed for emergency situations such as sudden illness or loss of income.

While the respondents report their preference for living with their sons, they do recognize that the extended family living arrangement is not the ideal arrangement for everyone. Respondent # 1 noted that in Canada, the extended family is not feasible due to everyone's desire to succeed on his or her own. There is more of a focus on individual achievement in Canada while families in Fiji were concerned with collective success. She went on to note that in Fiji all her maternal uncles lived together on the family farm along with their wives and children. She went on to state that despite the presence of so many women there was no conflict.

Some respondents attribute conflicts within a household to the daughter-in-law. As stated by respondent # 1, after sons get married, "differences do come. It is not like it was before."[5] The respondents were obligated to remain with their in-laws in Fiji and had to seek the approval of their mothers-in-law regarding all matters. On the other hand, daughters-in-law in Canada are usually not interested in adhering to a similar lifestyle. The respondents stated that in Canada the sense of duty is lacking and daughters-in-law desire more privacy and autonomy regarding their lives and decisions. There are also day to day conflicts such as a daughter-in-law's desire for a different type of food than the in-laws are accustomed to, ambition to socialize outside of the husband's family, desire to maintain close ties with her side of the family and lack of time to prepare daily traditional meals. The overall sentiment exists that daughters-in-law in Canada are not fulfilling their roles in the manner these respondents expected or hoped.

As mentioned earlier, some families try to alleviate the tension by maintaining a separate household within the same house. For example, the son will live with his wife and children upstairs while the parents reside downstairs or vice-versa. This allows for the

families to live together but maintain some form of autonomy. While this is becoming increasingly common there is still stigma attached to this form of living arrangement. This arrangement is revealed slowly to the community and only when concealing it is no longer feasible.

As with the stigma of living alone, there also exists a distinct stigma relating to living with one's married daughter. This stigma also exists for those respondents who do not have a son and have been sponsored to Canada by their daughter. In this case, upon immigrating to Canada, the parents make every attempt to secure a living arrangement that is independent of the daughter.

The respondents unanimously agreed that daughters are part of their husband's family upon marriage. Therefore, daughters are raised with the knowledge that they are part of someone else's family. This belief negatively affects the daughters in terms of education and property rights. The parents are less willing to invest in their daughters financially by educating them since they believe that they will not benefit from their daughter's financial prosperity. On the other hand, since sons are expected to reside with their parents, the parents are more willing to invest in their son's education. This is done in expectation that the son will care for them in old age. Similarly, daughters are not provided with property rights. As stated by respondent # 10, "we are doing all this for our son so that he can live in this house…the daughters will have some things but the house is son's."

However, there is some modification to this tradition. Some respondents have allowed for the fact that their daughter may not marry or their son will not care for them. Some of the respondents stated that daughters are a vital source of aid and support to them. In these situations daughters are provided with a share in the house. Among the respondents, those that have resided in Canada longer and have a spouse, are less dependent on their sons and hence are less inclined to favor their sons over their daughters. Despite some changes

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[5] The word "difference" in this sentence refers to the dissension and conflict present within a household.

most respondents adhere to the tradition of favoring their sons over their daughters. This may be due to the culture that dictates that only the son can perform the religious rituals for his parents upon their death.

C. Grandmothering Experience

Grandmothering has a long and rich history in Indo-Fijian culture. All respondents reported witnessing their mothers and grandmothers caring for their grandchildren. The role of the grandmother is held in high regard and was eagerly anticipated by all of the respondents. All of the grandmothers interviewed reported a close relationship with their grandchildren. Moreover, all grandmothers provide some form of care for their grandchildren. However, the amount of time invested in care of the grandchild is contingent on a variety of factors such as whether the grandchild is paternal or maternal, age of the grandchild, grandchild's living arrangement, grandmother's employment status, grandmother's health, and grandmother's duration of stay in Canada.

As mentioned earlier, the role of a grandmother is deeply entrenched in the Indo-Fijian culture. All of the respondents report knowing their grandmothers. However, the respondents reported that their grandmothers gave preferential treatment to and engaged in daily care of only their paternal grandchildren. In addition, most of these respondents recall watching their mothers and mothers-in-law carry on this tradition by selectively caring for their son's children. However, this was not the case for all respondents. While there appears to be an implicit expectation that all paternal grandmothers will assist in the care of their grandchildren, assistance is contingent on the health and availability of the grandmother. Grandmothers with health complications were less inclined to provide care. Also, some respondents stated that their mothers-in-law died at an early age and, thus, were not available to assist in childcare.

Two of the respondents who were widowed early in life reported that they did not receive childcare assistance from their husband's mother. Instead, these women received

child-care assistance from their mothers. The widowed women often move back in with their parents upon the death of their husband. Therefore, the maternal grandmothers of the respondent's children have greater access to the children and can provide help. In short, in the case of widowhood, child-care assistance from maternal grandmothers appears to be culturally appropriate.

The child care assistance by the grandmothers in Fiji consisted of overseeing the children while the mothers engaged in household work. However, the grandmothers in Fiji performed this role with great flexibility. The grandmothers in Fiji would often visit other relatives for extended periods of time. Hence, the grandmothers assisted with childcare while they were present at home but were not obligated to remain at home in order to care for the grandchildren.

All of the respondents interviewed reported looking forward to becoming a grandmother. They also stated that they expected to care for the grandchild upon their arrival in Canada or upon birth of the grandchild. One of the respondents explained that first, "there is nothing else to do" and second "who else is going to do it?" Therefore, in Canada, caregiving is seen as something that occupies their time while filling a crucial need for the adult children. The respondents maintain that grandmothers should help with their grandchildren and gave great credence to the role of a grandmother. One of the respondents explained that it is a grandmother's duty to be patient and kind to the grandchild. Moreover, paternal grandmothers are expected to aid their adult son and daughter-in-law in the care of the grandchild. The maternal grandmother is only expected to help if the paternal grandmother is not available to provide childcare. According to the grandmothers interviewed, a grandmother should live with her paternal grandchild(ren) and provide the needed care. This role is perceived as all the more significant in Canada since both parents often work outside of the home and a caregiver is necessary for the children. Most grandmothers prefer to provide care to their grandchildren and are apprehensive about having

someone outside of the family caring for their grandchildren. They also stated their concerns that an outsider may not adequately care for the child and would not be as affectionate and accommodating to the grandchild's needs. There also exists concern that if individuals outside the family and/or Indo-Fijian community care for the children they will become westernized and will be ignorant of their religion and culture.

As mentioned earlier, caring for the grandchild is primarily seen as the domain of the paternal grandmother. If the paternal grandmother was not available due to death, illness or geographical proximity then it is considered the responsibility of the maternal grandmother to assist with childcare. The respondents were unified in their stance that paternal grandmothers and maternal grandmothers, if paternal grandmothers are not able, should assist in caring for their grandchildren. The caregiving role entails providing day to day care, playing with the child, and teaching them about their culture, language and religion.

The respondents view the grandmother role as crucial in teaching the grandchildren about their culture, language and religion. The grandmothers engage with the children in their native tongue. Often the grandmother is the only member of the family that speaks that language. Most of the grandmothers interviewed stated that their grandchildren speak to everyone, except them, in English. The grandmothers encourage their grandchildren to speak in Hindi by telling their grandchildren that they do not understand English or by not answering the grandchildren unless they speak Hindi. One grandmother promised her grandchild a trip to Fiji if he learned to speak in Hindi. Another grandmother reported that she actively involves her grandchild in religious ceremonies so that he can be knowledgeable of their religious practices and values. Most grandmothers take the grandchildren with them to prayer services and cultural functions so that the child is exposed to their culture and language. Usually the parents (of the grandchildren) are unable to attend these ceremonies due to work or other commitments. Therefore, the grandmother is a vital link for the grandchildren to their culture. Furthermore, the grandmothers expressed pride that

grandchildren turn to them with questions regarding family history, food recipes, religion and language. Some grandmothers report still receiving calls from their adult grandchildren with requests for financial assistance, general advice, and food recipes for dishes that grandmother prepared for them when they were young. As indicated above, transmission of culture, religion and language to their grandchildren is a very important part of a grandmother's role.

All respondents reported being extremely close and attached to their grandchildren. Some of the respondents even went on to state that they felt greater emotional attachment to their grandchildren than their adult children. Respondent # 3 stated "I don't know why there is so much love for them – more than my own children. Whatever they want, even if I am tired or sick, I will do for them." Respondent # 6 further clarified, "I raised my children with lots of love but then came these small ones and more than my children I love these paternal granddaughters and grandsons…the children are older now so can't be affectionate to them so I am affectionate to them (grandchildren) – the young ones."

Most of the respondents mentioned looking forward to becoming an agi.[6] Interestingly, most respondents kept referring to their role as an agi when discussing their grandmothering experience. The notion of grandmothering for most respondents meant their relationship with their paternal grandchildren and more specifically, their paternal grandsons. Among paternal grandsons, respondents claimed the greatest affinity to the grandchild(ren) currently residing with them. The majority of the respondents commenced the discussion of grandmothering with affirmation that both maternal and paternal grandchildren are equal in standing. Nonetheless, they went on to describe providing more instrumental aid to their paternal grandchildren. The grandmothers engaged in activities such as babysitting, taking the children to school, cooking for the grandchildren, getting them ready for school, helping with homework, and driving the grandchildren to extracurricular activities. Some grandmothers reported that they also put the children to bed each night.

Initially, most respondents attributed their attachment towards their paternal grandsons to geographical proximity. They pointed out that their daughters live at farther distance. For example, some daughters are currently residing in Fiji or Australia. Therefore, there is less contact with their maternal grandchildren and as result they are less attached to their daughter's children. In contradiction, most grandmothers who have their daughters and maternal grandchildren present in the same city as them still reported being closer to their paternal grandchildren. The reason for this difference appears to be their perception of the daughter as belonging to someone else's family while the son remains in their own family unit. As articulated by respondent # 3, "we marry our daughters and they go somewhere else. They become someone else's daughter-in-law." This belief is also applied to the grandchildren. Respondent # 4 further clarifies, " if there is a girl they will go to someone else. I won't be as happy because someone else's family is growing. But with sons my family is growing." Respondent # 11 had the following insight to share about the differences she has noticed between paternal and maternal grandchildren, "maybe they think that the grandson will take care of them how the son is taking care of them now....this is not my experience but this is what I have seen. They are more attached to their paternal grandchildren. Maybe because maternal grandchild is different – is part of a different family. The daughter becomes someone else's. So they are more attached to son. Son stays in the family while the daughter gets married and goes into a different family."

Most grandmothers interviewed are currently residing with either their oldest or youngest son. Therefore, not only are sons in closer proximity but the grandmothers are usually residing with one of their sons. However, what this explanation overlooks is that the culture dictates that daughters are to be married away while every effort is made to ensure the son's continued residence with his parents. One respondent went to great lengths to secure for her son a bride who is from a poor family and is less educated in order to increase the

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[6] In the Hindi language paternal grandmothers are called agi.

chances of the son staying with them after marriage. She explained, "those who are very educated they want to stay on their own and have their own way. They don't bother about anyone. However, those that are poor and less educated they want to stay." There also appears to be a preference for selecting brides from Fiji who do not have relatives in Canada. This ensures that the bride would not have anyone here to encourage or support her in securing a separate residence from her in-laws or to leave her husband if she so desired. All this is done in effort to maintain the cultural ideal of married son residing with his parents.

This notion of the son residing with his parents upon marriage is in every sense an ideal that the culture strives towards. However, all respondents noted that living with a married son is difficult and not always feasible. They cited examples where mother-in-law or daughter-in-law was mistreated. Moreover, they attribute migration to Canada for the loss of extended family. In Canada, the desire for autonomy, privacy, independence and individual success overrides the commitment to the extended family. Moreover, daughters-in-law have greater freedom to be vocal about their needs for privacy, social networking, relationship with her family of origin, and economic independence. The grandmothers report that they were required to forego these needs when they married their husbands. They had envisioned a daughter-in-law who would fulfil the role as they had done in their youth. The traditional expectations are not met and thus become an issue of contention.

The grandmother caring for the paternal grandchildren fosters an amicable relationship between herself, her daughter-in-law and her son. The son and daughter-in-law appreciate the care provided and are more accommodating to her requests. As informed by respondent # 9, "Yes, I do think my relationship with her (daughter-in-law) has improved. She is very happy that I am taking care of her children so well." The presence of the grandchildren in the house alleviates some of the tension and unifies the family in an effort to provide the best care for the children. The role of the caregiver makes the grandmother a consequential component of the family whose skills and labour are imperative for freeing up

the daughter-in-law and son to concentrate on economic integration. As a caregiver for the grandchildren the grandmother fulfills an indispensable role within the family. Therefore, the daughter-in-law is less inclined to permanently sever ties with her mother-in-law due to the need for childcare. On the other hand, those daughters-in-law who have family members present in Canada are less dependent on their mothers-in-law for childcare. Therefore, in case of dissention these daughters-in-law are more likely to reduce their children's contact with their grandmother.

While caring for their grandchildren certain grandmothers receive some financial assistance from their adult children. The assistance provided is contingent on the grandmother's living arrangement. Those grandmothers residing with their grandchildren are expected to contribute towards the grandchild's care without any monetary reimbursement. The grandmothers endorse this ideology as well. The grandmothers were stringent in their articulation that paternal grandmothers should care for their grandchild since the children belong to her own family. In this culture taking money for the care of one's paternal grandchildren while residing with them is frowned upon. There does exist the expectation that in turn the adult children would provide for the grandmother's basic needs and take care of other expenses such as travelling and clothing. Those grandmothers that are widowed or do not have any other male children they could reside with can hardly refuse to care for their grandchildren. This also applies to those who are new to Canada and are dependent on their adult children for accommodation and other basic needs. In all these cases, the grandmother is solely dependent on her son (or sometimes daughter) for care and is less able to negotiate her role in the family. Respondent # 12 explained that while living with her son and daughter-in-law she was unable to refuse. "I can't say no. I have to look after the children…..because they are your own so have to help them out somewhat." Accordingly, respondent # 11 reports, "I don't think I can so no. How would I say no? They would feel bad. They would wonder why I refused." She went on to elaborate that among widows "those that are

employed and financially independent are probably able to refuse." This indicates that there is a strong pressure by the family and culture to care for the grandchildren and the ability to refuse is compromised if the grandmother is dependent on the adult children.

In comparison to grandmothers who are recent immigrants, grandmothers that have resided in Canada for a longer duration are more aware of the services in the community, have a wider social network and are often financially independent. Therefore, they tend to be less engaged in the caregiver role. While they all are eager to spend time with their grandchildren they report feeling less obligated to care for the children to ensure continuation of financial assistance from their adult children upon old age or to alleviate their isolation. The awareness of the old age security and pension programs reduces their fear of being without any assistance in old age. However, the dependency from their son is never completely eliminated since they still rely on their son to care for them if they get sick or if they become too frail to care for themselves. Moreover, culture and religion dictate that a son is needed for the funeral ceremony. Therefore, every attempt is made by the elderly parents to maintain some form of relationship with their son. Most respondents reported that their relationship with their sons are strengthened by providing care for their children. As stated by respondent # 9, "the better care you take of the children that is how they will be towards you."

The age of grandchildren is also a factor in the grandchild-grandmother relationship. The younger grandchildren are more dependent on their paternal grandmothers for care. Among the women interviewed, most of the grandmothers report being closer to the younger grandchildren. However the close attachment sometimes serves as a hindrance in the grandmother's ability to socialize. Respondent # 11 confirms, "the children don't go anywhere and if I go somewhere they become very upset and cause problems." This does change when the children get older. They grandmothers stated that life becomes easier as the grandchildren grow up. They become less demanding on grandmothers for time and attention. While

appreciating the freedom endowed upon them due to the grandchildren growing up the grandmothers do express sadness at the loss of that connection. Respondent # 6, "now they are getting older so they have stopped being affectionate as well. They are becoming distanced. They are becoming like my children as well...they are all grown up now and want to stay at their own homes while before they would come and stay here with me."

Most of the grandmothers reported that they commenced the caregiver role without any agreement or discussion of the arrangement. However, as mentioned earlier, the grandmothers expected to care for the grandchildren due to the cultural norms. The grandmothers not living with their grandchildren report being reimbursed for childcare through some form of payment. The payment is not negotiated but rather set by the adult children. In addition, the payment appears to be minimal in comparison to what a day home or daycare would charge for similar service.

The amount of care provided by the grandmothers is dependent on their employment status. It appears that unless they are employed, it is expected that grandmothers residing with their grandchild will provide childcare. Even grandmothers in poor health reported providing care for the grandchild residing with them. Those grandmothers who are unemployed and are recent arrivals report caring for their grandchildren fulltime. Those grandmothers who are currently employed outside of home provide care on their days off and in the evenings. The care provided by working grandmothers is not due to necessity but rather stems from the desire to spend time with the grandchildren.

However, given the opportunity, most grandmothers stated preference for outside employment over childcare. The grandmothers who are employed fulltime stated that outside employment gives them with the opportunity to get outside of the house, provides them with income and keeps them healthy. Nonetheless, some respondents stated that they are unable to get employment due to their lack of proficiency in English. For these grandmothers, caregiving occupies their time and in return the adult children pay for all household expenses.

The caregiving role is even more important for these grandmothers as they would be isolated at home without any outlet if it were not for the children. Respondent # 11 states, "Over here agis have to take even more care of their grandchildren because in Fiji most women don't work but over here everyone works. Therefore, agis that don't work need to care for their grandchildren. They need to spend time with the children. Their lives wouldn't be that great if they didn't have children around. They would be isolated inside their house. If they want to go somewhere they need to drive. Life is good here for those that drive and are educated. For those who are not educated, grandchildren are very important in their lives."

As indicated above, the grandchildren are meeting the grandmothers' social needs. The grandmothers returned to this issue continuously during the interviews. One respondent explained that she would "go crazy" if it were not for the children around the house. She disclosed that in the summer she is able to get around but in the winter she is stuck in the house and the children keep her company. The grandmothers explained that in Fiji they were constantly busy with work and people. On the other hand, in Canada, there is very little to do in terms of housework. Furthermore, after everyone leaves for work they are left at home alone. Thus, caring for the grandchild alleviates the loneliness and gives them a sense of purpose or duty. The role of a caregiver gives the grandmother purpose and a sense of worth knowing that she is contributing to the family by caregiving for the grandchildren. The caregiver role also legitimizes and secures their claim to the financial support provided by the adult children.

The caregiver role not only legitimizes the grandmother's status within the family, it also presents her with recognition within the community. The grandmothers are aware that the care they are providing is consistent with the role of an ideal grandmother. They further stated that community members commend them on taking such good care of their grandchildren. There is recognition within the community and among the grandmothers that not all grandmothers are as involved as they are in their grandchildren's care. Therefore, the

ones that are providing full-time care to their grandchildren are afforded credence for their commitment.

In conclusion, as evident above, all grandmothers provide some form of care to their grandchildren. Some grandmothers only provide care for their children occasionally while others are the primary caregiver[7] for their grandchildren. The duration and extent of care varies with each respondent. The form of care and time spent caregiving for the grandchild(ren) varies depending on whether she is the paternal or maternal grandmother, her employment status, marital status, living arrangement, health, age of grandchild, and duration of stay in Canada. Furthermore, as discussed above, there are great benefits and costs attached to this role. Overall, this role is of great value and is cherished by both the grandmother and her grandchildren.

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[7] The term primary caregiver in this context refers to those grandmothers who care for their grandchildren while their adult children are at work.

Chapter 5: Discussion

A. Purpose of the Study

This study was undertaken to understand the meanings Indo-Fijian grandmothers assign to their grandmothering role by examining their familial roles as they play out in a Canadian context. The findings demonstrate that new immigrants experience ambiguity and insecurity regarding their financial and social future in Canada. Unemployed grandmothers assume caregiving responsibilities for their paternal grandchildren in order to secure ongoing financial and social support from their sons. The grandmothering role has been restructured and modified in the Canadian context in order to increase the grandmother's sense of financial and social security in a new environment.

B. Review of Key Findings

1. Grandmothering Experience

The findings of the present study revealed that Indo-Fijian grandmothers are actively involved in their grandchildren's lives. Many of these grandmothers are fulfilling the duties typically associated with parenting. These include taking children to school and extracurricular activities, helping children with their homework, and teaching children about their culture. Most importantly, grandmothers provide care for their grandchildren while parents (adult children) are at work. It follows that the grandmothering styles of these Indo-Fijian grandmothers are similar to Neugarten and Weinstein's (1964) surrogate-parent style and Cherlin and Furstenberg's (1986) involved grandparenting style. However, in contrast, the grandmothers in the present study adopted the surrogate-parent or involved grandparenting styles primarily in relation to their paternal grandchildren.[8]

Due to language and cultural limitations these grandmothers have minimal contact with the English speaking segment of Canadian society. Therefore, grandchildren play instrumental roles in their grandmother's acculturation by educating their grandmothers about

the host society. Some grandmothers report learning about Canadian geography and history by being present while the grandchildren do their homework. In addition, the grandchildren keep their grandmothers abreast of the local news and events. Furthermore, grandchildren also provide their grandmothers with companionship. Grandmothers consistently noted that they "would go crazy if it were not for the grandchildren."

Grandmothers in the present study receive suggestions on how to dress and speak from their grandchildren. This is consistent with Hagestad's (1985) study, which found that grandmothers have a greater tendency to change their dress style and views on social issues via the influence of their grandchildren. The influence of grandchildren in the present study may be even greater due to these grandmothers lack of proficiency in the English language and limited accessibility to the host society. For these grandmothers grandchildren are informative and crucial in their grandmothers' socialization into Canadian culture. For instance, grandmothers report learning about Canadian customs and social conventions by observing their grandchildren's interaction with English speaking part of Canadian society. Thus, the grandchildren's advice and assistance are taken with great appreciation and in some instances, actively sought.

While grandchildren are instrumental in educating the grandmothers about the Canadian culture, the grandmothers also play an equally important role in educating the grandchildren about their own culture and language. The grandmothers believe that their grandchildren should be knowledgeable and aware of their culture and, as indicated in chapter four, grandmothers go to a great extent to ensure that their grandchildren are aware and knowledgeable about the Indo-Fijian culture. The grandmothers take personal responsibility in educating their grandchildren about their culture, language, food preparation, etiquette, and religious practices. As reported in chapter four, these grandmothers are usually the only ones in the family unit that speak in Hindi to their grandchildren and, moreover, the

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[8] This will be discussed in greater detail later on in this chapter.

grandmothers take pride in teaching their grandchildren about their religious and cultural values and practices. The grandmothers see the role of educator of religious practices and transmitter of culture and language as a key aspect of the grandmothering experience. This role of educator and transmitter of culture and language has not received much attention in the previous studies of grandparenting styles. The role enacted by the grandmothers in the present study is somewhat similar to Kivnick's (1982) valued elder role.[9] However, the present study expands on the description of valued elder by demonstrating that grandmothers are not only teaching their grandchildren about family history but are also instrumental in facilitating intergenerational transmission of religion, culture and language. As indicated above, this study illustrates that the grandmothers are a key link in the transmission of religion, culture and language in immigrant families.

2. Factors Affecting Grandmothering Experience

a. Geographical Proximity

During the interviews, most grandmothers reported being emotionally closest to their paternal grandchildren. The grandmothers elaborated that the greater closeness is due to the fact that they live with their paternal grandchildren. The close physical proximity provides the grandparent with greater access and opportunity to develop an intimate relationship with the paternal grandchildren. The findings of the present study support Cherlin and Furstenberg's assertion that grandparents will report greatest affinity to the grandchildren residing in close proximity to the grandparents. However, the proximity factor as described by Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986) is limited in explaining the entire circumstance. The present study demonstrates that cultural factors supercede the proximity factor. For instance, grandmothers in this study residing approximately equal distance from both their maternal and paternal grandchildren still reported being closer to their paternal grandchildren. This

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[9] Kivnick's (1982) definition of valued elder consists of a grandparent who imparts advice, teaches the grandchildren the family history and ensures that the grandparent is well regarded and

difference in grandmothers' relationship with their maternal and paternal grandchildren is indicative of the cultural beliefs that allocate greater value and privilege to paternal grandchildren.

b. Lineage

As discussed above, the grandmothers in the present study report being closer and having more contact with their paternal grandchildren. This is contradictory to the prevalent studies, which indicate that maternal grandparents are closer and have more contact with their grandchildren (Cherlin and Furstenberg 1986; Hagestad 1985; Mills et al. 2001). The reason for the difference lies in the cultural beliefs of the respondents. In this culture, the daughters are seen as part of their husband's family upon marriage. Similarly, maternal grandchildren are seen as belonging to someone else's family. Thus, caregiving for the maternal grandchildren is not deemed as beneficial as caregiving for the paternal grandchildren. The income generated by an employed daughter will go to her husband's family while the income from a daughter-in-law's employment will indirectly improve the paternal grandmother's living standard.

The findings of the present study clearly demonstrate that paternal grandmothers are engaging in selective investment in their paternal grandchildren. Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986) explain selective investment as the tendency for some grandparents to concentrate on relationships that have the greatest potential for emotional return. However, the Indo-Fijian grandmothers in this study selectively invest in relationships that also have the greatest potential for symbolic, biological, instrumental and economic return. The Indo-Fijian grandmothers report greater attachment to their paternal grandsons and explain that paternal grandsons will remain in the family and continue their family line while maternal grandchildren belong to a different lineage. Neugarten and Weinsten (1964) refer to this as biological renewal. Biological renewal refers to the tendency of some grandparents to view

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remembered by the grandchildren.

grandparenthood as a means of maintaining continuity in their family line. As well, paternal granddaughters are not given the same credence as paternal grandsons since female children are expected to marry out of the family and provide care to their husband's family. The patrilineal culture discourages parents from receiving assistance from their married daughters or their daughter's offspring since it is believed that parents lose claim to their daughter upon marriage.

c. Relationship to Adult Children

In previous studies, the grandparent-grandchild relationship has been found to be contingent on the grandparent-parent relationship. For instance, Hagestad (1985) revealed that the quality of grandparent-grandchild relationship is dependent on the middle generation, specifically the women in the middle generation. As well, Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986) stated that those grandparents who do not get along with their daughters or daughters-in-law encounter difficulty accessing their grandchildren. However, in the present study, caregiving for the grandchildren actually improves the grandmothers' relationships with their daughters-in-law. These grandmothers have a functionally central role in their son and daughter-in-law's life.[10] As a caregiver for the grandchildren the grandmother fulfills a crucial role in the family. Therefore, daughters-in-law are more tolerant and accepting of the mothers-in-law. This in turn, reduces conflict and makes the relationship more amicable.

d. Marital Status

The issue of grandparents' marital status has not been widely studied. As discussed in the last chapter, single grandmothers have a higher likelihood of engaging in surrogate-parenting of their grandchildren. In like fashion, the present study demonstrates that widowhood has significant impact on the grandmothering experience. Grandmothers that are widowed and dependent on their sons for financial and social support are less able to refuse

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[10] Functionally central refers to the degree extended family members are needed for the survival of a nuclear family unit (Clavan 1978).

child care responsibility. The dependency of these grandmothers on their adult sons decreases their ability to negotiate their caregiving roles within the family.

e. Socioeconomic Status

All of the grandmothers interviewed immigrated to Canada with the expectation of improving their economic status. Those grandmothers able to secure employment are actively involved in their grandchildren's care but do not assume primary responsibility for their grandchildren's care. However, grandmothers unable to secure employment contribute to the household income and occupy their time by caring for their grandchildren. The caregiver role is adhered to more closely by grandmothers who are recent immigrants, unemployed and widowed. These women are solely dependent on their sons and daughters-in-law for financial and social support. Therefore, they are less able to negotiate their caregiver role.

All grandmothers reported great love and dedication to their grandchildren. However, grandmothers reported preference for outside employment over child-care responsibilities. The grandmothers explained that financial independence is crucial for personal autonomy. Most grandmothers stopped extensive caregiving for their grandchildren as soon as they acquired an employment position or started receiving pension.

C. Exchange Theory

The general proposition of exchange theory is that people avoid costly behavior and seek relationships, positions and feelings that maximize their rewards (Nye 1982). Individuals generally accept that every behavior and choice will have some costs attached to it. However, in deciding a course of action, people accept the option that provides them with greatest reward at the least cost. An action or option is deemed to be beneficial when the rewards exceed the costs. In exchange theory, rewards are classified as any relationship, behavior, experience, interaction, and position that is a source of gratification for the individual. On the other hand, costs are identified as any action that results in punishment or rewards forgone. Punishment is anything that the person dislikes, for instance, rejection and persecution. A

reward forgone is anything that the person loses out on by choosing one alternative over another. There are a number of general sources for rewards and costs such as, social approval, autonomy, security, and money. For a person to remain in a role, relationship or position, the rewards of that role, relationship or position have to be equal to or greater than the level of rewards that the individual believes he or she is entitled to. This standard of evaluation is called comparison level. While engaging in comparison, people also examine the alternate options available for a role, relationship, or position. The theory states that people will leave their current role, relationship or position if a better alternate is found.

A central underlying premise of exchange theory is the norm of reciprocity. The norm of reciprocity basically advocates that people should reciprocate the assistance or gifts they receive from others and should not seek to harm those that have been of assistance to them. This normative rule helps people to calculate costs and benefits and make strategic decisions for the long term, that is, to calculate how immediate "investments" will "pay off" in the future.

D. Applicability of Exchange Theory

Previous studies have found exchange theory instrumental in explaining exchange behavior among immigrant and minority populations. Uttal's (1999) study demonstrates the importance of considering the extended family network and the prevalence of exchange behavior in the explanation of childcare choices made by employed Hispanic and African-American mothers. To elaborate, Uttal (1999) argues that an individual's choices and decisions should be examined in the larger context by studying the effects of class, race and gender on an individual's decision. Uttal's (1999) examination of the extended family socioeconomic network revealed that kin-based care is being utilized among ethnic minorities in order to meet the economic needs of extended family members. The parents are not just utilizing kin-based care in order to meet their own cultural and structural needs. They are also

taking their relatives' economic needs into consideration. These parents are providing their relatives with a source of income.

The present study also indicates the applicability of exchange theory on immigrant extended family arrangement systems. The findings from the present study demonstrate that Indo-Fijian immigrant grandmothers are engaging in exchange behavior by caregiving for their paternal grandchildren. The grandmother's caregiving for the grandchildren allows the rest of the family members to seek employment and accumulate capital. The resulting increase in family income improves the entire family's living standard, which in turn benefits the grandmother in both the short and long term.

In Fiji, women are not expected to contribute to the family income. None of the women interviewed were employed back in Fiji. According to the culture, the husband is primarily responsible for his wife and children's financial security. Moreover, upon the husband's death, the son assumes financial responsibility for the family. However, upon immigrating to Canada the husband's and son's obligation to the other family members becomes less stringent. In Fiji, the husband and son are held accountable by other relatives and surrounding community members. These informal sanctions are reduced in Canada. The grandmothers in the present study reiterated that their children's commitment to the collective wellbeing of the family lessens in Canada and their goals of individual success receive foremost priority. As a result, grandmothers in Canada are less secure in the ability and willingness of their sons to care for them. Thus, those able to obtain employment do so in an effort to obtain financial security. However, due to their lack of education and limited knowledge of English, a significant number are unable to get employment. For these grandmothers, caregiving for their paternal grandchildren becomes a financially and socially beneficial role.

In the Indo-Fijian community the son typically resides with his parents upon entering marriage. For new immigrants, an extended family arrangement becomes a fundamental tool

in guaranteeing a cohesive and functional family unit. This type of living arrangement allows for family members to pool their resources in order to increase their social and economic capital. Upon immigration, due to the family's economic uncertainty, all household members are required to contribute towards financial integration. Family members can contribute to the family income by either directly entering the labor force or by engaging in activities that enable other family members to pursue employment (Duleep 1998). For those grandmothers who are unable to secure employment either due to their age or limitations in English, caregiving for their paternal grandchildren becomes a valuable and meaningful way to contribute towards the family income. In Canada, the grandmother is needed for childcare so that the daughter-in-law can work outside of home. In order for the daughter-in-law to engage in outside employment the cost of working outside has to be substantially below the wage she will receive in her employment position. The presence of children increases the cost of women working outside of home (Duleep 1998). Since the grandmothers are able to provide childcare at minimal cost, the cost of outside employment becomes less for their daughters-in-law and increases their chances of entering into employment. Therefore, with more family members working, family income is enhanced, enabling a better lifestyle for the entire family unit.

Caregiving for the paternal grandchildren also increases the grandmother's status within the household. As availability of a caregiver is essential in allowing the daughter-in-law to work, the grandmother's role becomes important and provides her with more of a negotiating power within the family structure. The caregiver role changes her status from a dependent and powerless family member to that of a contributing and vital part of the family.

In addition, the grandmother's caregiving for her paternal grandchildren fosters an amicable relationship between herself, her daughter-in-law and son. Since the grandmother's caregiving for her grandchildren is extremely beneficial for her adult son and daughter-in-law

in alleviating them of child-care responsibilities, the son and daughter-in-law are less likely to sever ties with their mother or mother-in-law.

Caregiving for paternal grandchildren is socially beneficial for the Indo-Fijian grandmothers. First, as these women are unable to secure employment they spend a considerable amount of time alone at home and are isolated from their friends and relatives within the community. Therefore, through caregiving for their grandchildren they are able to alleviate some of the loneliness and occupy their time with the grandchildren. Second, the role of educator and cultural transmitter gives grandmothers stature within the community and provides them with a sense of purpose. The grandmothers in this community are praised and credited for their grandchildren's ability to speak Hindi and engage in cultural events. Moreover, the grandmothers see the grandchildren's knowledge of cultural practice and language as a reflection of their own effort and investment in their grandchildren. Some of the grandmothers do this at the cost of their own acculturation goals. For example, grandmothers insist that their grandchildren speak their native language at home in order to increase their grandchild's proficiency in Hindi instead of speaking and learning English from their grandchild. Third, the findings reveal that Indo-Fijian grandmothers selectively invest in the care of their paternal grandchildren. The grandmother's close bond with her paternal grandson and selective investing in his care ensures that the paternal grandson will grow up to care for the grandmother. The close bond increases the likelihood of the grandson providing care for the grandmother in her old age. Indeed, studies have demonstrated that children with strong grandparental involvement grow up with and maintain a stronger sense of obligation toward future support for the older generation (Cherlin and Furstenberg 1986; Furstenberg 1981). In addition, caregiving for the paternal grandchildren facilitates in cementing the grandmothers' relationship with their sons. The caregiving is conducted partially on the hope that the son (adult child) will remember the caregiving services rendered by his mother and will care for her with similar dedication in her old age.

As discussed above, grandmothers in Canada attempt to secure their economic and social future by caregiving for their paternal grandchildren. This investment provides the grandmothers with both short and long term social benefits. The caregiving role is beneficial for the grandmothers in providing them with financial security, meaningful role, status and companionship. Despite the benefits, most grandmothers do not wish to remain in the caregiver role for an extended period. Over time, grandmothers begin to engage in comparison of the rewards and costs attached to this role. As the costs increase grandmothers become less invested in their caregiving role.[11] The decrease in their commitment to caregiving is facilitated by the availability of alternate options, for instance, income from employment or pension and the presence of a spouse.

The caregiver role is not new to these grandmothers. They report witnessing their mothers and grandmothers engage in the care of their paternal grandchildren. However, the grandmothers in the present study reported that the grandmothers in Fiji were not as tied to the role of caregiver. The grandmothers in Fiji would normally supervise the children for short periods of time. As well, the grandmothers in Fiji were free to socialize with their neighbors and family members while supervising the grandchildren. Furthermore, the grandmothers in Fiji were mobile and could travel and visit other relatives at any time. They were not obligated to remain at home to care for the grandchildren and the family income was not contingent on grandmothers being available for childcare. The caregiving role in Canada is more restrictive and isolating. The caregiving responsibilities interfere with the grandmothers' ability to socialize with other community members. When grandmothers first arrive in Canada this is not seen as a major problem since the grandmothers do not have a wide network of people to socialize with. However, as grandmothers become familiar with other community members and begin forming relationships with individuals outside of their immediate family, the caregiving responsibility becomes a hindrance in their ability to

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[11] The costs of the caregiving role will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

socialize. The grandmothers' lack of opportunity to socialize is a significant drawback of this role. As discussed earlier, as costs attached to a role increase people tend to become less interested in maintaining that role.

The instability of the extended family living arrangement in Canada and the underlying tensions within the household also add to the costs of the caregiving role. As indicated in chapter four, grandmothers are quick to point out that the extended family arrangement is not the same as it used to be. The daughters-in-law in Canada require greater independence and privacy. These become issues of contention and possible conflict between grandmothers and their daughters-in-law. Moreover, while the daughters-in-law are expected to cater to the wishes of their mothers-in-law in Fiji, this is not widely adhered to by daughters-in-law residing in Canada. In addition, the caregiving of paternal grandsons done by grandmothers facilitates the dependency of these grandmothers on their adult sons and daughters-in-law. The grandmothers have to rely on their sons and daughters-in-law to recognize and appropriately reward or reciprocate for the grandmothers' caregiving assistance. Nonetheless, the grandmother is not guaranteed present or future care. Finally, there is recognition among these grandmothers that dependency increases vulnerability to mistreatment and/or abuse. All respondents had stories of some mother-in-law they knew who was being mistreated by their daughter-in-law or vice-versa. These significant costs facilitate the grandmothers dissatisfaction with the caregiver role.

Since grandmothers typically rely on their sons for financial and social support, grandmothers have to secure alternative source for both financial and social support before being able to renegotiate their caregiving role. Some grandmothers reduce their caregiving duties after they start receiving income from their employment or pension. However, it needs to be clarified that upon securing a source of income, only grandmothers who also have an alternative source of social support are able to reduce their caregiving duties. In addition, the

grandmothers' ability to secure an alternate source of social support is contingent on their martial status.

The grandmothers' marital statuses are extremely significant in their ability to negotiate their caregiving roles. The availability of a spouse is the most consequential social factor in allowing these women to renegotiate their caregiving roles. The husband is a source of social support and provides the grandmother with recognition and stature within the community.[12] Therefore, grandmothers who have a spouse are less dependent on their sons and paternal grandchildren for social support and thus, are more empowered to reduce their childcare responsibilities.

On the other hand, widowed grandmothers are less able to distance themselves from this role. As discussed earlier, the widowed women within this community are not awarded the same stature and recognition as their married counterparts. Therefore, widowed women rely on their sons for social status and recognition within the community. Hence, despite the costs attached to this role, the widowed grandmothers' dependence on their sons for social support prevents these grandmothers from renegotiating their caregiving role.

Despite the hesitance to fulfil the caregiving role for an extended period, the grandmothers never completely sever their ties to their sons and paternal grandchildren. Perhaps, this is due to the religious and cultural belief that the son is needed for the prayer ceremony at death. As indicated earlier, their need for their son's care becomes even more crucial upon the death of their spouse. Therefore, most grandmothers still expect their sons to care for them when they are too frail to care for themselves and so they continue to invest in the grandmother/son/grandson relationship. This study demonstrates that grandmothers continue to engage in the caregiving role, despite the costs, due to structural and cultural

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[12] In this culture, the women are always identified in relation to the males in their lives, in youth as someone's daughter, upon marriage as someone's wife, and in old age as someone's mother.

constraints. In addition, alternate options that can potentially liberate them from their caregiving roles tend to be absent.

E. Future Research

Further study is needed for grandmothers who only have daughters. Do grandparents residing with their married daughter and maternal grandchildren engage in similar exchange behavior? What supports do these grandmothers have? Do they rely on their maternal grandsons or granddaughters for assistance or future care? Also, studies on the grandparenting experience of grandfathers are needed? What roles do grandfathers play in their grandchildren's lives? Do unemployed grandfathers engage in similar exchange behavior as unemployed grandmothers?

F. Conclusion

As acknowledged in chapter two, grandparents can be actively involved and yield great influence or they can be a remote and distant figure in their grandchildren's lives. Factors such as geographical proximity, age, health and martial status are just a few of many variables that determine the nature of grandparent-grandchild relationships. This study has shown that the experience of immigration and integration also impacts the grandparenting experience.

The immigration experience results in a great sense of ambiguity and insecurity regarding their financial and social status in Canada. Grandmothers attempt to gain economic security through employment. However, due to their lack of education and proficiency in English, some grandmothers are unable to secure employment. These grandmothers have adapted by providing care for their paternal grandchildren. The caregiving of the paternal grandchildren is provided in exchange for financial and social assistance from their sons. This caregiving is provided in exchange for both the current assistance the sons provide them and for the future assistance the grandmothers hope to receive from their sons and paternal grandsons.

The present findings indicate that grandmothers initially enter the caregiving arrangement to secure their son's financial and social support. However, the commitment to this arrangement is reduced when the cost overrides the benefits. For instance, the grandmother's loss of autonomy, an increase in ambiguity regarding whether the son and his wife will actually provide care for her in old age and a perceived lack of security stemming from seeing the extended living arrangement fail for other community members increases the grandmother's insecurity and ambiguity regarding her future. The ambiguity and insecurity coupled with the availability of alternative source of income through pension or employment moves the grandmothers to decrease her commitment to the caregiving role. Instead the grandmother pursues the alternate sources of financial and social security in order to increase her autonomy and independence. However, the grandmother's ability to seek and secure alternate sources of security is contingent on her marital status. Grandmothers with a spouse are less dependent on their sons for financial and social support and, thus, less tied to the caregiver role. On the hand, grandmothers without a spouse are often solely dependent on their son for financial and social support and, therefore, less able to renegotiate their caregiving role.

In conclusion, previous studies (Fry 1980; Sokolovsky 1997) have indicated that the degree of status and esteem accorded to elders in the community are connected to four cultural factors: "(1) an available role set emphasizing continuity and important responsibilities in community organization and public life; (2) integration into multigenerational domestic kin network; (3) control of some important material and/or informational resource; (4) a value system praising a group-oriented ideology while de-emphasizing individual ego development" (Sokolovsky and Vesperi 1991: 21). As demonstrated in the present study, caregiving for their grandchildren provides these grandmothers with an essential position within the multigenerational family structure,

prestige within the community, a purposeful role in life and a sense of pride stemming from their role of educator and cultural transmitter.

G. Policy Implications

This study demonstrates that the need for economic security for uneducated and unskilled new immigrants is being relegated to the private sphere. These grandmothers' needs for financial and social integration are being met by extended family members. In return the grandmothers provide childcare for their adult children. The caregiving responsibilities decrease the grandmothers' opportunity to attend language and/or employment training programs. Attendance in these types of classes or programs has the potential of facilitating employment later on in life when need arises due to grandchildren getting older or unwillingness of the adult children to care for her. A more proactive stance by the government by increasing the availability and accessibility of language training classes may prevent future dependency of these grandmothers on social assistance programs. In addition, while providing childcare the grandmothers are not contributing to a pension or income security program that they can utilize later on in life. The Canadian government has recently started allocating pension credits to mothers who stay at home to care for their children. Similar benefits need to be extended to grandmothers providing care to their grandchildren.

Liberal democratic citizenship rights have evolved over time to include rights for political participation as well as social rights, which includes the right to a minimum level of economic security (Brodie 1997). The inability of these grandmothers to integrate financially and socially restricts their ability to exercise their citizenship rights. This is in fact an issue for the public sphere. The privatization and familialization movement by the government increasingly relegates the needs of individuals like these grandmothers to their extended family. This dependency on the extended family increases the grandmothers' vulnerability to mistreatment and exploitation by family members.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

1. Age?
2. Present marital status?
3. How many years of formal education do you have?
4. What type of work do you do?
5. How do you support yourself? Do you receive financial assistance from anyone?
6. Number of children?
7. Where are the children? (In Edmonton, Fiji or elsewhere)
8. How long have you been in Canada?
9. Why did you immigrate to Canada? Were you sponsored? If yes, who sponsored you?
10. What is your legal status in Canada? (Canadian citizen, refugee or landed immigrant)
11. What do you like about living in Canada? What don't you like?
12. Do you feel accepted by Canadians?
13. How well can you speak and/or understand English?
14. Were you able to speak and/or understand English in Fiji? If yes, how did you learn English? Who taught you? Did you attend ESL classes?
15. Currently, who do you reside with?
16. In Fiji, who did you reside with?
17. Ideally, who would you like to live with?
18. What kind of living arrangement do you think works best in Canada? Is this arrangement similar or different from the living arrangements prevalent in Fiji?
19. How many grandchildren do you have?
20. Do they all live in Edmonton? If not, where do they live? How far away/close are they from you?
21. How often do you see your grandchildren?
22. What kind of activities do you engage in with your grandchildren?
23. How do you feel about the amount of contact you have you with your grandchildren?
24. What is your relationship with your grandchildren like?
25. Is there any difference in your relationship with your daughter's children and your son's children? What about grandsons versus granddaughters?
26. Do you live with any of your adult children or grandchildren?
27. In your culture what is the role of a grandmother?

28. How do you think grandparenting role is different in Canada in comparison to how it was in Fiji?
29. What makes a woman an aaji or nanni? Does the birth of a grandchild make her an aaji/nanni or is it the relationship with the grandchild that makes her an aaji/nanni?
30. What did you think grandparenting would be like? How is it in fact?
31. What would you tell an expecting grandmother? What do you know now that you didn't know before?
32. What is your relationship like with your adult children?
33. What is your relationship like with your daughter/son-in-law?
34. How is the relationship with your adult children different from your relationship with your grandchildren?
35. Do you wish anything in your life could be different?
36. How do you feel about your life right now?
37. What is your typical day like?
38. Are you friends with anyone who is not related to you and is not part of the Indo-Fijian community?
39. Are you friends with anyone not related to you in the Indo-Fijian community?
40. How often do you see your friends?
41. Are you happy with the amount of contact you have? If not, what prevents you from seeing them more/less?
42. Do you ever feel lonely? If yes, how often and why? What do you do about it?
43. Are you able to get around the town on your own? If not, who takes you?
44. What duties are you responsible for in your family?
45. What kind of support or assistance do you provide to your grandchildren?
46. What kind of support or assistance do your grandchildren provide for you?
47. What are the good things in your life? What makes you happy in your life?
48. Is there anything else you want me to know? Something I forgot to ask?